

477
THERON and *ASPASIO*:

OR, A

S E R I E S

OF

DIALOGUES

AND

L E T T E R S,

UPON THE

Most Important and Interesting Subjects.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By JAMES HERVEY, A.M.

Rector of *Weston-Favell*, in *Northamptonshire*.

*My Mouth shall daily speak of thy Righteousness and Salvation;
for I know no End thereof. Psalm lxxi. 13.*

V O L. II.

L O N D O N:

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4





13. SERIES
OF
DIALOGUES.

DIALOGUE IX.

THERON, impressed with the last Conversation, was very desirous to resume the Subject, and renew the important Debate. With this View, He conducted his Friend into a Retirement, commodious for the Purpose.

They enter a spacious *Lawn*; which lay opposite to the House; and stretched itself in the Form of an expanded Fan. The Mounds,

on either Side, were dressed in Verdure; and ran out in a slanting Direction. The whole, to an Eye placed at a Distance, bore the Resemblance of a magnificent *Vista*; contracting, by slow Degrees, its Dimensions; and lessening, at last, into a Point. Which, the regular and graceful Seat, with all imaginable Dignity, supplied.

Nature had sunk the Lawn into a gentle *Declivity*. On whose ample Sides, were Oxen browsing, and Lambs frisking. The lusty Drovers lowed, as they passed; and the thriving Flocks, bleated welcome Music in their Master's Ear.—Along the Midst of this verdant Slope, ran a spacious and extensive *Walk*. Which, coated with Gravel, and fenced with Pallisadoes, looked like a plain Stripe of Brown, intersecting a Carpet of the brightest Green.—At the Bottom, two handsome *Canals*, copiously stocked with Fish, floated to the Breeze. Whose Waters, beheld from every Front Room in the House, had a fine Effect upon the Sight; not without a refreshing Influence on the Imagination.—At the Extremity of one, stood a stately *Colonnade*. The Roof was elevated on Pillars of the *Ionic* Order; and the Area flabbed with Stones, neatly ranged in the Diamond-Fashion. Several Forest-chairs accommodated the Anglers with a Seat, while the bending Dome supplied them with a Shade.

Corref-

DIALOGUE IX. 5

Corresponding, and on the Margin of the other Canal, was erected a *Summer-house*, of a very singular Kind.—The lower Part, had an Opening towards the North. It was cool; it was gloomy; and had never seen the Sun. It carried the romantic Air of a *Grotto*, or rather the pensive Appearance of a *Hermit's Cell*.—The Outside was coarse and rugged with protuberant Stones. Partly over-spread with Ivy, partly covered with Moss, it seemed to be the Work of antient Years.—You descend, by Steps of Turf, through a low and narrow Door. A scanty iron Grate, instead of a large sweeping Sash, transmits a glimmering Light; just sufficient to discover the inner Structure. Which appeared, like one continued Piece of Rock-work; a Cavern, You would imagine, cut from the surrounding Quarry.—*Above*, hung an irregular Arch; with an Aspect, rather threatening, than inviting. *Below*, lay a Paving of homely Pebbles; in some Places, a little furrowed, as though it had been worn by the frequent Tread of solitary Feet. *All around*, were Rusticity and Solemnity; Solemnity, never more visibly seen, than through a Gloom.—The Furniture, of the same *grotesque* Fashion, with the Apartment. A Bench hewed, You would suspect, by Nature's Chizel, out of the solid

Stone. A Sort of Couch, composed of swelling Moss, and small fibrous Roots.—From one Corner, trickled a pure Spring: which crept, with a bubbling Moan, along the channeled Floor; till its healthy Current was collected into a Bason, rudely scooped from the Ground. On the Edge of this little Receptacle, lay chained a rusty Bowl; and over it, stood an antique worm-eaten Table.—On the least obscure Part of the Wall, you discern, *dimly* discern, a Parchment Scroll; inscribed with that sage, but mortifying Admonition; VANITY OF VANITIES! ALL IS VANITY!

Over this Recess, so pleasingly horrid, and adapted to solemn Musings, arose an open and airy *Belvidere*. You ascend by winding Stairs; and coming from the *uncouth* Abode below, are sweetly surprised with an *elegant* Hexagon.—The Ceiling lofty, and decorated with the softest, richest, almost flowing Fretwork. The Wainscot, in large Pannels of Oak, retained its native Auburn: so *beautifully plain*, that, like an amiable Countenance, it would have been disfigured, rather than improved, by the most costly Paint. On this were disposed, in gilded Frames, and to great Advantage, a Variety of entertaining *Landscapes*. But none surpassed, none equalled, all were a Foil to, the noble lovely Views, which

DIALOGUE IX. 7

which the Windows commanded.—The Chimney-piece, of white shining Marble, streaked with Veins of vivid Red. Over it, was carved a fine Festoon of artificial, in it, was ranged a choice Collection of natural Flowers.—On a Table of glossy Walnut, lay a portable *Telescope*; attended with *Thomson's Seasons*, and *Vanierii Prædium Rusticum* *.

The whole was fitted up in the highest Taste, and furnished with every pleasurable Ornament. On purpose to harmonize with that *lavish Gaiety*, which seemed to smile over all the Face of Nature. On purpose to correspond with that *vernal Delight*, which came breathing on the Wings of every fragrant Gale. I may add, on purpose to remind the Beholder of those *immortal Mansions*, which will be decorated with Images infinitely more splendid, with Objects unspeakably more glorious: where holy Beings will spend, not a few vacant Hours in refined Amusement, but a boundless Eternity in the Consummation of Joy.—For, to a well-turned Mind, Nature is

* *Vanierii Prædium Rusticum*—A most elegant *Latin Poem*: which treats of every remarkable Peculiarity, relating to the Business of a Country Life, or the Furniture of a Country Seat.—It entertains us with a Description of the most agreeable Objects; in an easy Flow, of the purest Language, and most musical Numbers.

It is, I think, one continued Beauty. Superior to every Thing of the Kind, I have met with among the Moderns; and scarcely, if at all, unworthy the first Genius of the *Augustan Age*. *Uni Virgilio secundus, & pæne par*.

is a Preceptor ; and these are her *instructive* Lessons. To the pure in Heart, even Sense is edifying ; and these are its *delicate* Moralities.

The redundant Waters of the Canal, rolled off in a spreading *Cascade*. Which, tumbling from many a little Precipice, soothed the Air with a Symphony of soft and gurgling Sounds, Nor ever intermitted the obliging Office,

From Morn to Noon, from Noon to dewy Eve.

But, when the fanning *Breezes* dropt their Wings ; when the feathered Choir were hushed in Sleep ; when not so much as a chirping Grasshopper, was heard throughout the Meads ; this liquid Instrument still played its *Solo* : still pursued its busy Way, and warbled, as it flowed, melodious Murmurs.

Ass. Such, *Theron* ; so uniform, uninterrupted, and invariable, should be our Conformity to the divine Law.—But alas ! those sacred Precepts are so *exceeding broad*, that the most enlarged human Obedience, is far from being commensurate to their Extent : so *absolutely holy*, that our highest Attainments fall vastly short of their exalted Perfection.—How then can We expect Justification, from such a consummate Rule ? How dare We place our Dependence, upon such imperfect Duties ?

DIALOGUE IX. 9

Duties? Especially, before a GOD of unerring Discernment, and immaculate Purity.

Ther. Because Mankind are incapable of pleasing their MAKER, by yielding an *absolute* and *invariable* Obedience to the moral Law; does it follow from thence, that they cannot render themselves acceptable to Him, by an universal Course of sincere Obedience?

Assp. I think, it follows from what has been already observed. If You desire new Arguments, they are at hand.

The Law, says the Teacher of the *Gentiles*, *is the Ministration of Condemnation* *. How can this be true, if it requires no more than a *sincere* Obedience; such as is proportioned to our infirm State? If this be sufficient to justify, and intitle Us to our CREATOR's Favour; the Law ceases to be the Ministration of Condemnation. It becomes (which is flatly contradictory to the Apostle's Doctrine) the Ministration of Righteousness.

The Law is styled, by the same inspired Teacher, *A Schoolmaster* to bring Us to *CHRIST* †. How can it, upon your Supposition,

* 2 Cor. iii. 7. In *this* Place, I apprehend, the Apostle means the *moral* Law, and that principally. As that alone was written and engraven on Stones. Elsewhere, I believe, He uses the Word in a larger Sense; and intends to exclude *all* Law whatever, from bearing any Share in our Justification.

† Gal. iii. 24. Παιδαγωγός, *A School-master*: Who pretends not to *finish* the Education of Youth; but directs them to,

10 DIALOGUE IX.

position, be qualified for such an Office? If a sincere Obedience be the whole of its Demands, it can no longer direct Us to *CHRIST*; it will no longer deliver Us over to a REDEEMER's Merit; but must draw and attach Us to *itself*. Teaching Us to look upon its Precepts, and our own conscientious Observance of them, as the Tenure of eternal Life.

Do You insist upon a third Proof? A third presents itself. Not so much founded on Argumentation, as deduced from Example.—How was *Abraham* *, the Friend of GOD, and Father of the Faithful, justified? By a Course of sincere Obedience? No; but by Faith in the promised MESSIAH. *Abraham worked not*, with a View to obtain Justification; *but believed on Him, who justifieth the Ungodly*.—How was *David* *, the Man after

GOD's

to, and prepares them for, higher Studies, or nobler Employments. The Law, in like manner, aims not at furnishing Us with a Title to Happiness; but *sits, disposes, and disciplines* Us, for the all-sufficient REDEEMER.

Some have thought, that *εἰς Χριστόν* signifies, *Until the Coming of CHRIST*. But this will hardly consist with the Genius of the Language, or with the Import of the following Clause, *That We might be justified by Faith*.—Besides, this would confine the Efficacy of the Law, to that Period of Time, which preceded our LORD's Incarnation. Whereas, it *still* does, and *always* will act, (until this Corruptible shall put on Incorruption) in a Way of Subserviency to his Merits.

* These two Examples are, with the truest Judgment selected, and with the utmost Propriety applied. *Rom. iv. 4.*

61.

DIALOGUE IX.

11

GOD's own Heart, justified? By his Zeal for the LORD, and by his eminent Services? No; but by a Righteousness imputed: even that Righteousness of the blessed REDEEMER, through which *Iniquity is forgiven, and Sin pardoned*.—And can We be said to walk *bumbly*, or can We be thought to walk *surely*, if, refusing to tread in the Steps of these exemplary Saints, We divert into a Path of our own devising?

Ther. “Of our own devising!”—No, my Friend: there is a *milder* Law introduced by the Gospel, condescending and merciful to our Infirmities, which accepts of Sincerity instead of perfect Obedience.

Asp. When was this milder Law introduced, and the stricter abrogated?—Not upon the Entrance of Sin, I presume. At this Rate, the original Law must be the Creature of a *few Days*, perhaps of a *few Hours* only. But can We imagine, that the all-wise and unchangeable GOD would ordain a System of Precepts,

&c. Gen. iv. 6, &c.—*Abraham* was the most illustrious Pattern of Piety, among the *Jewish Patriarchs*: *In Glory there was None like Him*, Eccus. xlv. 19. *David* was the most zealous and seraphic of their Kings: *A Man after GOD's own Heart*. 1 Sam. xiii. 14. If neither of these was justified by *his own* Obedience; but each by an *imputed* Righteousness: If they both obtained Acceptance with GOD, not as *upright* Beings, who might claim it; but as *sinful* Creatures, who must implore it; the Consequence is glaring. It is such, as must strike every attentive Understanding, and must affect every individual Person.

Precepts, to be disannulled, as soon as enacted?—Not in our LORD's Time, I am very certain. That holy Commandment, which requires *supreme* Love to GOD, and *perfect* Charity to Men, He assures Us, was still in Force*. Nay, it is evident, from the Nature of the DEITY, and from our Relation to one another, That it always will be in Force; that it never can cease; but is necessary and everlasting.

“ A milder Law, condescending to our Infirmities”—What can be the Purport of such an Institution? It must be supposed to speak the following Language; “ Be it known unto You, O Children of *Adam*, that You are no longer enjoined to love the LORD with all your Strength, nor to love your Neighbour as Yourself.—Once, indeed, I insisted upon absolute Purity of Heart; *now* I can dispense with some Degree of evil Concupiscence.—Since *CHRIST* is come, and his Gospel preached, You need not always be clothed with Humility; but may feel some little Emotions of Pride.— In short; because You are *weak*, I will *connive*; or even accommodate my Demands to your enfeebled and depraved Condition.”

Not to urge, (what must be shocking to every Ear) That such a Doctrine would make the

* *Matt. xxii. 37, 38, 39.*

the HOLY ONE of GOD, a Minister of Sin; and the Gospel of our Salvation, a Patent for Licentiousness. Let me only ask—Does this agree with our LORD's Declaration? *One jot or Tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled* *.—Is this suitable to the Perfections of the divine LEGISLATOR? *With whom is no Variableness, nor Shadow of Turning* †?—Will this consist with the avowed Resolution of the Almighty JEHOVAH? *He will magnify the Law, and make it honourable* ‡.

Ther. However You may decry, what I call the milder Law, St. Paul asserts it to be the Christian Scheme. This He strenuously argues for, as the only Scheme by which any Man can be justified in the Sight of GOD.

Asp. Does He, *Theron*? In what Epistle? What Chapter? What Verse?—He says, addressing Himself to the Galatian Converts; *I do not frustrate the Grace of GOD; for, if Righteousness come by the Law, CHRIST is dead in vain* ||. From which Passage, We learn two very momentous Truths. That, to derive a justifying Righteousness from the Law, is not only derogatory to the Honour of Grace, but *subversive* of its very Being.—That, by seeking

* Matt. v. 18. † James i. 17. ‡ Isaiah xliii. 21.
|| Gal. ii. 21.

seeking to be justified by our own conscientious Behaviour, We make, as far as in Us lies, the Death of *CHRIST* a *vain* Thing; for which there was no Occasion, and of which there is no Use.

To the same Purpose it is written in that invaluable Epistle to the *Romans* *; *If they which are of the Law be Heirs; if they, who trust to their own Performance of the Law, are thereby intitled to the heavenly Inheritance; Faith is made void, and the Promise made of none Effect.*—See now, my Friend, the Tendency of your Opinion! It is not a mere speculative Mistake; an Error of inconsiderable Consequence; but such as strikes at the Fundamentals of the Gospel. Instead of being the only *Christian* Scheme, it totally overthrows † *Christianity* itself. For, it would render

* *Rom. iv. 14.*

† St. Paul says of those Preachers, who taught Justification by the Works of the Law, *They would pervert*, or (as the Original *παραστρέψαι* may be translated) subvert and overthrow the Gospel of *CHRIST*.—To pervert, give a *wrong Turn*, or a *false Colour*, seems not to express fully the Apostle's Idea; nor to preserve the native Energy of his Argument. The *Greek* Word is equivalent to the *Hebrew* *שׁוּב*, which We generally render *coverters*. Gal. i. 7.

It may be worth our while, to transcribe Beza's Descant upon the Passage: which is no less pertinent, than it is important. *Quid enim magis contrarium est Fidei, sive gratuita Justificationi, quam Justificatio ex Lege, sive Meritis, non CHRISTI sed nostris? Itaque qui volunt ista duo conciliare, magis etiam sunt inepti, quam si quis conetur Lucem cum Tenebris, Mortem cum Vita conjungere.*

render the Promise abortive, and supersede the Necessity of Faith. It would destroy the very Existence of Grace, and make even the Death of *CHRIST* a superfluous Transaction.

Ther. This I see, *Aspasso*; That the Method of obtaining Acceptance on Account of our own Sincerity, is a benign Expedient; such as corresponds with the compassionate Nature of the *DEITY*; and is what, the Apostle styles, *being justified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law.*

Ass. How! To be justified by Faith, and justified by Sincerity, the *same* Thing!—Is it possible, that these should be *equivalent* Terms?—Let me illustrate my Query by a Similitude, which our present Situation suggests. Sometimes, an easy Comparison is more convincing, than a laboured Argument.

From this pleasing Eminence, We command an extensive View of the Country. Our Eye connects the artless Grandeur of Nature, with the elegant Embellishments of the Summer-house. Nor is the public Road the least entertaining Part of the Scene. Because, it presents Us with a *moving Picture*; with a perpetual Succession of new Objects. —How many Travelers have passed in Review, since We took our Seat in this agreeable Elevation! Just at this Instant, a *Stage-coach*

coach bolts out of the Lane: filled, I presume, with Passengers, that reside in the Neighbourhood, or are to lodge in the next Market-town. We will suppose them set down at their Journey's End. An Acquaintance visits them: congratulates them on their Arrival: and asks that customary Question, "How they came?"—"We came, say they, "without walking a Step ourselves; yet by "walking, as well, and as far, as We were "able."—Is this Answer *intelligible*? Are these two Methods of traveling *consistent*? So intelligible is my Friend's Doctrine. So consistent is Justification, vouchsafed *without* the Deeds of the Law; and Justification obtained, by performing the Deeds of the Law, *as well* as We are able.

Ther. Without the Law, signifies, Without the Necessity of an exact and unerring Conformity to it.

Asp. This is not *without*, but *by* the Law, qualified in the Rigour of its Demands, and departing somewhat from the Perfection of its Precepts. Could You affirm, with any Propriety, that this Part of the Hemisphere is *without the Sun*? Because, an intervening Cloud has moderated its Fervour, and abated its Glare.

What says the Apostle? His Words in another Place, will determine his Meaning in this.

this. If a State of Acceptance with GOD, be of *Works*; be referable to our own Obedience, whether sincere or perfect; *it is no more of Grace* *. Works and Grace, in Point of Justification, are irreconcilable Opposites †. They mutually vacate each other.

But why do I speak of Grace? If my Friend's Opinion prevail, Grace is at an end. What We took to be the Gospel, turns out a Covenant of Works. Salvation ceases to be a free Gift, and becomes a necessary Payment. For, *to Him that worketh*, that performeth what the Law requires, *is the Reward not reckoned of Grace*; but He may claim it, as Matter of Debt ‡.

Ther. You take no Notice of what I urged, concerning the *Benignity* of this Scheme; and how much it magnifies the *Clemency* of the great LEGISLATOR.

Assp. But why should Clemency erect its Throne, on the *Ruins* of almost every other Attribute?—This Method would dishonour the

* Rom. xi. 6. The Passage produced by *Assasio*, refers immediately to the Doctrine of Election, and but remotely to the Privilege of Justification. However, as the former includes the latter, if *that* be perfectly free, *this* cannot be the Consequence of Works. The Argument, therefore, I apprehend, is conclusive, though the Proof is not so direct.

† *E diametro inter se opponuntur, Moses & JESUS CHRISTUS: Lex & Promissio: facere & credere: Opera & Fides: Merces & Donum.* Bengel.

‡ Rom. iv. 4.

the *Veracity* of GOD; which has denounced a Curse, upon every Deviation from his revealed Will.—It would deprectate the *Administration* of his Justice; which cannot but punish, whatever violates his sacred Precepts.—It would greatly derogate from the *Dignity* of his Law; and make it a mere Thing of Wax. To bend; and truckle; and take its Form, from the Sin and Weakness of human Nature.

Ther. Will the divine Law then make no favourable Allowances for human Infirmities, for constitutional Faults, and Strength of Passion?

Ans. Far be it from me to represent the Law of the MOST HIGH, either more strict, or more yielding, than it really is. To avoid all Possibility of such a Mistake, let Us hear the Declaration of the Law itself. *Cursed is every One that continueth not in all Things, that are written in the Book of the Law to do them*.*

Every One; without any Exception of Persons; without any Regard to Pleas, either of human Weakness, or violent Temptation.—*That continueth not*; it is not enough to observe these holy Commandments, in the general Tenour of our Conversation. Our Course of Obedience must be without any Intermis-

sion;

* Gal. iii. 10.

sion; from the earliest Dawn of Reason, to the latest Period of Life.—*In all Things*; We must refrain from all the Sins, that are forbidden, and from every Approach towards them. We must practise all the Virtues, that are enjoined, and in their full Extent of Perfection.

In a Word; the Law insists upon Obedience, perfect in its *Principle*; perfect in all its *Parts*; perfect in every *Degree*; and in each of these Respects *perpetual**.—The least Deficiency in any one Particular, renders Us liable to Vengeance; and, notwithstanding any Repentance for Transgressions, notwithstanding all Pretensions to Sincerity of Heart, subjects Us to the Curse.

Theran paused.—He seemed to be struck with Surprise.—But rallying his Thoughts, replied. If this be the Sense of the Passage, Who of all Flesh can be saved?

Asp. Say rather; If the Extent of the divine Law be so enlarged, if its Demands be so high, and its Sanction so awfully rigorous; then must every Mouth be stopped—then is all the World become guilty before GOD—and, *by the Works of the Law shall no Man living be justified.*

Ther.

* That the Law insists upon an Obedience *absolutely perfect*, will be farther evident to the attentive Reader; if He considers the Tenour of St. Paul's Argumentation, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, and to the *Galatians*. Particularly *Rom. iii. 23. iv. 15. Gal. iii. 21.*

Tber. Will not such excessively severe Doctrine, drive People into Despondency, or even drown them in *Despair*?

Asp. No, *Tberon*; unless it be *such* a Despair, as is the Parent of heavenly Hope; and productive of those amiable Twins, Peace and Joy. A Despair, I mean, of being reconciled to our offended GOD, and of obtaining eternal Happiness, by any Satisfaction or any Duties of our own.

Tber. Surely, You forget the gracious *Manifesto*, published by the condescending KING of Heaven; *If there be first a willing Mind, it is accepted, according to what a Man hath, not according to what He hath not* *. Is it not plain from this Text, that infinite Goodness will admit our honest, though imperfect Endeavours. And, since We are not able to pay an *unfinning*, will mercifully accept our *best* Obedience.

Asp. I do not forget, but possibly my Friend may misapply the gracious *Manifesto*.—To whom was the Word of this Consolation sent? To true Believers; who had *given their own-selves to the LORD* †; who were *established in CHRIST* ‡; and *abounded in Faith* §.—If You likewise, my dear *Tberon*, acknowledge Yourself a vile Sinner in your worst, and an unprofitable

* 2 Cor. viii. 12. † 2 Cor. viii. 5. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 21.
§ 2 Cor. viii. 7.

profitable Servant in your best Estate : if, in consequence of this Acknowledgment, You fly for Refuge to the Wounds of a *crucified SAVIOUR*; and rely, for Salvation, only on *his Obedience* unto Death : then, You imitate those *Corinthian Converts*. Then You may apply that indulgent Declaration to Yourself. And then would I venture to address You, in the elegant and cheering Language of the royal PREACHER; *Go thy Way, eat thy Bread with Joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry Heart; for GOD now accepteth * both thy Person, and thy Performances.*

But, if You overlook the Righteousness of the blessed *JESUS*; if You depend upon Yourself and your own Attainments; You are (how shall I speak it!) not accepted, but accursed. In such a Case, You have already heard your Doom denounced by *Moses*, and may hear it ratified by the Apostle of the *Gentiles*; *As many as are of the Works of the Law,*

* Eccles. ix. 7.—*Isaïas's* Remark discovers an *Ambiguity* in the Word *accepted*.—If People mean, That sincere Obedience shall be accepted, as *their justifying* Righteousness; as that which constitutes their Title to everlasting Felicity: the Proposition is extremely false.—If they mean, That the sincere Obedience of Believers, though very imperfect in itself, shall be *graciously regarded* in *CHRIST*, and find Favour through his all recommending Merit: the Sentiment is unquestionably true.—Is Sincerity the *Effect of Faith*? Then We may rejoice in it, with the happy Apostle, 2 Cor. i. 12. Would Sincerity be the *Condition of our Justification*? Then We must renounce it, with holy *Job*, Chap. ix. 15.

Law, who seek Justification by their own Observance of its Commands, *are under the Curse* *.

Ther. Under the Curse! Because, our Attempts to obey, though faithfully exerted, are attended with Defects! Is not this unreasonable and shocking? *Unreasonable*, that the GOD of Justice should establish a Law of such consummate Perfection, as no Child of *Adam* can, even with his utmost Assiduity and Care, fulfil? *Shocking*, that the GOD of Mercy should thunder out so severe a Denunciation, on the least inadvertent Breach, on every unavoidable Failure?—This exceeds the relentless Rigour of *Draco*, or the tyrannical Impositions of the *Aegyptian* Task-masters. *Draco* is said to have written his Laws in Blood. Yet He never enacted such Institutions, as were absolutely too strict and difficult to be observed. And, though the *Aegyptian* Task-masters insisted upon the full Tale of Bricks, without allowing the necessary Proportion of Straw, yet the Punishment they inflicted, was incomparably less than everlasting Destruction.

Assp. Had GOD Almighty's Design in delivering his Law to fallen Mankind, been, to propound the *Means* of their *Justification*; your Argument would have been valid, and your Inference undeniable. But the SUPREME

* *Gal.* iii. 10.

PREME LEGISLATOR had a very different, a far more mysterious End.—However, before I proceed to touch upon this Point, let me desire to know *your* Opinion.

For what Reasons, think you, was the Law ordained?

Ther. For what Reasons?—To deter Men from the Commission of Vice, and excite them to the Practice of Virtue.—To set before them a Rule for their Conduct; which if they diligently observe, they shall be *rewarded* with eternal Happiness; which if they presumptuously transgress, they shall be *punished* with eternal Misery.

Ass. The Law is undoubtedly a *Rule* of Conduct to All, not the *Condition* of eternal Happiness to Any. If Man had never fallen, this Doctrine had been sound Divinity; and this Method, a practicable Scheme. But, ever since the *Fall*, such a Way of Salvation, is somewhat like the *North-East* Passage. As Mountains of Ice, and the severest Rigours of Winter, block up *this*: so, extreme Impotence in Man, and the utmost Perfection in the Law, bar up *that*.—*The Law*, saith the Apostle, *is weak*; is incapable of furnishing Us with a Title to the heavenly Felicity*.

Not

* *Rom. viii. 3.* Therefore he says in another Place; *IF there had been a Law given, which could have given Life, Gal.*

Not through any Defect in its Precepts, but *through the Flesh*; through the Inability of our degenerate Nature.

Yet I must confess, You are not alone in this Opinion. Multitudes have unwarily entertained the same Notion: Not apprehensive, that they frustrate hereby the Grace of GOD, and render it of none Effect with regard to themselves. — If You examine the *scriptural* Account, You will find it quite of another Strain.

Ther. Pray let me hear the scriptural Account. For, whenever those DIVINE ORACLES speak, I am all Attention. Where-ever they interpose their Authority, I am all Submission.

Assp. By the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*. Far from being our Justifier, it is our Accuser. It arraigns and proves Us guilty. It demonstrates, beyond all Possibility of Contradiction, that the very best among Us, have failed and come short of our Duty; nay, that the very best among Us, have done amiss, and dealt wickedly.

I was alive without the Law once, says the Apostle†. I thought myself upright and holy; and intitled, by Virtue of these Qualifications,

iii. 21. It is the same Way of speaking, and intended to denote the very same *Impossibility*, which is implied in that Speech of JEHOVAH to Abraham; *IF a Man can number the Dust of the Earth.* Gen. xiii. 16.

* Rom. iii. 20.

† Rom. vii. 9.

fications, to Life eternal. But when the Commandment came, shining in its Purity, and operating with Power, Sin revived; a clear and lively Sense of Guilt shot, like a piercing Ray, through all my Soul. I saw myself chargeable with many past Provocations, I felt myself subject to much remaining Corruption. In consequence of which, I died; my vain Conceits were blasted; my presumptuous Hopes expired: I could not but acknowledge myself, justly liable to Condemnation and Death.

Ther. It had this Effect on Saul, when He was a malignant and barbarous Persecutor. But, when People are virtuous and benevolent, what Purpose does it then serve?

Asp. A very important one. Yet such as may, probably, at the first Hearing, affect You with a little Surprise. The Law entered, says the Apostle, that the Offence might—

Ther. Be restrained, no doubt.

Asp. That the Offence might abound*, is the Assertion.

Ther. Surprising indeed! Is it possible that GOD's Law should give Countenance to Sin? Nay, add Spurs to the Sinner?

Asp. Let Us beware of mistaking our sacred Casuist. The Law entered, not that the Commission of Sin might be authorized, but that the

* Rom. v. 20.

the *Abundance* of our Sins might be *manifested*. That all Mankind, even your virtuous Persons, may perceive the great Multitude of their Iniquities; the greater Impurity of their Hearts*; together with the utter Imperfection of their highest Attainments, and best Services.

This End could not be answered by a Law, relaxed in its Demands, or warping to our Weakness; only by a System of Precepts, every Way exact, and in all Degrees perfect.—Whoever would represent to his Neighbour, the Spots that sully, or the Scars that disfigure his Countenance, must effect the Design, not by a stained, but by a pure Mirror.

Ther. The Knowledge of Sin, and a Conviction of our exceeding Sinfulness!—These are Intentions, which I should not have suspected.

Ass. These are not all. There is another Intention of the Law, equally necessary, and no less awful. It reveals the Wrath of GOD, against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men†.—Having set before the Sinner, his innumerable Offences, and enormous Guilt; it denounces the Doom, which He deserves. It unsheaths the Sword of Justice, and threatens the Offender with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the LORD.

Ther.
* And therefore was Law giv'n them, to evince
Their natural Pravity. Milt. B. XII. 287.

† Rom. i. 18.

Ther. A modern Writer supposes, that GOD may *set aside* the Law, in Favour of frail Men. I might far more reasonably suppose, that He would *mitigate* the Law, on the same Consideration. But what You urge, makes me afraid to lean on so precarious a Prop.

Ass. To look for Comfort and Salvation from this Quarter, would be to *lean*, as the *Arabian Proverb* speaks, *on a Wave of the Sea*: which will not only fail to support, but will certainly swallow up, the unadvised and rash Depender.

No, *Theron*; rather than the divine Law should lose its Honours, *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* were laid in Ashes; the antient World was destroyed with a Deluge; the present Frame of Nature is destined to the Flames, and all its unholy Inhabitants will be condemned to Hell.—Nay, rather than the *least Title* should pass unaccomplished, its Curse has been executed on GOD's own SON, and all its Injunctions have been fulfilled in the Person of *JESUS CHRIST*.

Ther. As I dare not confide in the modern provisory *Salvo*, so neither can I accede to your severe and terrifying Notions.—The Laws of a wise and beneficent Governor, are calculated for the *Good* of his Subjects. What Good can accrue to Us, from receiving such a Sentence, and possessing such Convictions?

Ass.

Ass. Much and various.—Though I might mention many Advantages, I shall content myself with selecting one. Which is not only valuable in itself, but the Introduction to every spiritual Blessing.—Hence We are taught to *see* our Danger : hence We are made to *feel* our Misery : that We may no longer sleep in Security, but solicitously look out for Deliverance, and gladly accept the sovereign Remedy.

Ther. The Law then, according to your Representation, is intended to *accuse* me—to *convict* me—to *condemn* me. So it becomes, instead of a salutary, a killing System.

Ass. *The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life* *. If We adhere to the literal Sense, without attending to the spiritual Design : if We regard only the Precept and the Sanction, as they stand in *themselves* ; and neither consider, nor improve them, as acting in *Subserviency* to the MEDIATOR's Righteousness ; they are doubtless a killing Ordinance, and bind Us down under a Sentence of Death.—But rightly improved—Hold ! Let me proceed no farther with the Argument.

You are a Sportsman, *Theron*, and delight in the manly Recreations of the Field. You must therefore have read that fine Poem, which so elegantly describes your favourite Diversion.

Ther.

* 2 Cor. iii. 6.

DIALOGUE IX.

29

Ther. The CHACE, I suppose, You mean.

Asp. The same.—Do You remember the large Description of the *royal Stag Chace*?

Ther. Perfectly well. It is not a Week, since I perused the whole Passage; and with as much Pleasure, as if it had been intirely new.

Asp. Then You can give me a Summary of the agreeable Narrative.

Ther. I can. But will not this Chace lead Us away very far from our Subject?

Asp. Perhaps, not so far as You imagine. I have a Reason for my Request.

Ther. What Reason, I beseech You?

Asp. You shall soon know. Only favour me with the Account.

Ther. I protest, I cannot discern the least Connection, between these rural Sports, and the grand Topic of our Conversation. However, since You command, I will implicitly obey.

The Stag, roused from his Lair, shakes his dappled Sides; tosses his beamy Head; and, conscious of superior Agility, seems to defy the gathering Storm.—You see, speaking of Poetry, I have caught something of the poetical Strain.

Asp. This invlivened Manner excites my Eagerness, and makes me more desirous to hear the Sequel.

Ther.

Then. First, He has Recourse to Stratagem, and evasive Shifts. He plunges into the Copse; darts across the Glade; and wheels about in doubling Mazes; as though He would pursue, even the Foe He avoids. The full-mouthed Pack unravel all his Windings, and drive Him from his wily Arts.

Now, He betakes Himself to Flight, and confides in his Speed. He bursts through the Woods; bounds over the Lawns; and leaves the lagging Beagles far behind. The Beagles slow, but sure, trace his Steps, through Woods, through Lawns, through half the extended Forest. Unwearied, still unwearied, they urge their ardent Way, and gain upon the alarmed Object of their Pursuit.

Again He flies. Flies with redoubled Swift-ness. Shoots down the Steep; strains up the Hill; and takes shelter in the inmost Recess of some sequestered Grove. The sagacious Hounds hang, with greedy Nostrils, on the Scent. They recover, by indefatigable Assiduity, the Ground they had lost. Up they come a third Time; and, joining in a general Peal of Vengeance, hurry the affrighted Animal from his short Concealment.

Perplexed, and in the utmost Distress, He seeks the numerous Herd. He would lose Himself, and elude his Pursuers, amidst the Multitude of his Fellows. But they, uncon-
cerned

cerned for a Brother's Woe, shun the miserable Creature, or expel Him from the selfish Circle.—Abandoned by his Associates, and haunted with Apprehensions of approaching Ruin, He trembles at every Leaf that shakes. He starts; He springs; and wild, and swift as the Wind, flies He knows not where, yet pours all his Soul in Flight.—Vain, vain are his Efforts. The horrid Cry, lately lessened, thickens upon the Gale, and thunders in his Ear.—Now, the poor breathless Victim is full in View. His Sprightliness forsakes Him. His Agility is spent. See! how He toils in yonder Valley, with faltering Limbs, and a hobbling Gait. The Sight of their Game, quickens the Pace, and whets the Ardour, of the impetuous Hounds. With tumultuous Violence they rush in, and with clamorous Joy demand their Prey.

What can He do? Surrounded as He is, with insulting Tongues, and ravenous Jaws? Despair is capable of inspiring even the timorous Breast. Having nothing to hope, He forgets to fear. He faces about, and makes a resolute Stand. The Trunk of a sturdy Tree, covers his Rear; and his own branching Horns, defend Him in Front. He rushes upon his Adversaries; goars some; lays others groveling on the Turf; and makes the whole coward Pack give way.

Encouraged

Encouraged by this unexpected Success, his Hopes revive. He rallies once again his drooping Spirits; exerts the little Remainder of his Strength; and springs through the midst of the retiring Rout.—It is his last, last Chance. He stretches every Nerve; once more loses Sight of the Rabble from the Kennel; and, finding no Security on the Land, takes to the Water. He throws his burning Sides into the River; sails down the cooling Stream; and flinks away to the Verge of some little shelving Island. There, finding a Resting-place for his Feet, He skulks close to the shady Margin. All immersed in the Wave; excepting only his Nostrils, He baffles, for a while, the prying Eye of Man, and the keener Smell of Brute.

Discovered, at length, and forced to quit this unavailing Refuge, He climbs the slippery Bank. Unable to fly any longer, He stands at Bay against an aged Willow. Stands, all faint with Toil, and sobbing with Anguish. The Crouds that gather round Him, with merciless and outrageous Transport, triumph in his Misery. A Multitude of blood-thirsty Throats, joined with the sonorous Horn, ring his funeral Knell.—The Tears, till this fatal Instant unknown, gush from his languishing Eyes, and roll down his reeking Cheeks. He casts one more Look on the Woods, the Lawns, the

the pleasing Scenes of his former Delights; and, determined to die, prepares to sell his Life as dear as possible.

At this most critical Juncture, the royal Sportsman comes up. He sees the distressed Creature; and, as soon as He sees, He pities. The Clemency, which attends the Throne, accompanies even the Diversions of Majesty. He issues the high Command. The prohibitory Signal is given. The Pack, though raving for Blood, are checked in a Moment. And not checked only, but called off from the Prey. Disappointed and grumbling, they retire: and leave the intended Victim of their Fury, to enjoy his Liberty, his Safety, and his Ease again.

I have now followed the Stag, till I have tired your Patience. Why did You suffer me to run on, at this extravagant Rate? You know, I am, on these favourite Topics, an everlasting Talker.

Asp. Why this Apology, *Theron*? I am sure, You did not see my Lips yawn, or my Head nod, while You was pursuing your Subject. Besides, I intend to make Reprizals, and put *your* Attention to the same Tryal.

Thus the Strictness of the *Law* pursues the Soul; dislodges it from every Refuge of Lies; and never remits its terrifying Menaces, till the poor Delinquent ceases from Self-confidence,

dence, and fixes on *CHRIST* for his whole Salvation *.

The Man, perhaps, is awakened into a serious Concern for his eternal State. In consequence of which, He relinquishes his profane and iniquitous Practices. Breaks the Sabbath, and defrauds his Neighbour no more. —But the Law quickly represents, and in a glaring Light, that a *Negative* Obedience is by no Means sufficient, to deliver from the Wrath to come.

Upon this, He betakes Himself to a Course of *positive* Holiness. Gets acquainted with religious People, and performs religious Duties. Prays in secret, and attends public Ordinances. Conscientiously observes the *LORD's* Day, and regulates his Behaviour by the Rule of *GOD's* Commandments. Now, He is ready to congratulate Himself on his remarkable and hopeful Reformation.

Soon He perceives, that all his Proficiency is but Skin-deep : a mere *outside* Varnish : which has not penetrated the inner Man. He begins, therefore, to watch over the Motions, and bewail the Evils of his Heart. He labours to subdue Pride, and curb Passion; to purge out filthy Lusts, and to banish spiritual Wickedness. Notwithstanding all his Vigilance,

* *Lex Hominem urget, donec is ad CHRISTUM confugit. Tum ipsa dicit; Asylum es nactus; desino Te persequi; sapi, salvus es.*
Bengel.

DIALOGUE IX. 35

lance, Conscience flies in his Face, either for the Neglect of some Virtue, or the Commission of some Sin. The Law rings in his Ear that dreadful Denunciation; "Curfed is He, that performeth not *all* Things."

Struck by this Conviction, his Wounds bleed afresh. He is obliged to seek some new Balm for his Sore. In order to appease an offended GOD, and atone for his sinful Relapses, He makes many sorrowful Confessions; poffibly, fubmits to voluntary Sufferings. He denies Himfelf, and beftows liberally on the Poor. He fighs deeply, and mourns bitterly. —But can Waters that are muddy, cleanse the Garment that is filthy? Wilt Thou fatisfy, O vain Man, for one Sin, by committing another? In *theſe* penitential Exercifes, were thy Thoughts ſteadily devout? In *theſe* Acts of Beneficence, was thy Heart warmly affectionate? If not, ſuch fanſied Reparations of paſt Faults, only aggravate the heavy Score.

What ſhall He do? He cannot *pay*. To *beg* He is aſhamed. Fain would He enter into Life, yet not be too much indebted to Grace. He attempts therefore to *compound* with Heaven. He binds Himfelf by ſolemn, perhaps by ſacramental Engagements, to uſe greater Circumſpection for the future. Then turns his Eye to the divine MEDIATOR; not with a View of relying wholly on his

Righteousness; but only to obtain such a Supply, as may make up the Deficiencies of his own.—Somewhat like this was the Mistake of the *Galatian* Converts; against which *St. Paul*, in his Epistle to that People, so solidly disputes, and so sharply inveighs*.

For a while, He holds fast his purposed Integrity. At length, falling notoriously short, in executing his Part, a startling Voice sounds in his Ear that dreadful Alarm; “Curfed is “He that *continueth* not.” His Heart sinks with Discouragement, and all his Resolutions hang their enfeebled Heads. He has tried every Method, that He can devise; and has found every Method ineffectual. All his Expedients are a Spider’s Web, and his Hope is as the giving up of the Ghost.

His Soul, pursued by the Law, and hunted by Terror, is brought to the Gates of Death, or the very Brink of Despair. And now the KING of Kings, now the LORD our Righteousness, appears for his Rescue. Now is accomplished that gracious Declaration; *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy Help.*

* *Sharply* indeed! For, instead of saluting them, under the honourable Title of *Saints and Faithful in CHRIST JESUS*; He stigmatizes them with that severe Appellation, *O foolish Galatians!*—And as to their Practice, which was a Departure from Justification by *CHRIST alone*, He styles it, not merely an Error, but an Error of the most mischievous and horrid Kind—an *Infatuation*—a *Bewitchery*, *Tis* *Caesar’s*. Gal. iii. 1.

Help *.—Driven from every false Refuge, and drawn by the blessed SPIRIT, He comes weary and heavy laden to *CHRIST*. Convinced of the Sin of his Nature, the Sin of his Life, and the Sin of his best Duties, He renounces Himself in every View. This is all his Salvation, and all his Desire, that He may win *CHRIST*, and be found in Him. Did that poor afflicted Woman say? *If I may but touch his Garment, I shall be whole.* With equal Ardour does this inlightened Sinner cry; “If I may but have Fellowship with the glorious IMMANUEL, in his Merits and in his Benefits, I am alive from the Dead; I am happy for ever.”

Having seen a Glimpſe of the tranſcendent Excellency of the REDEEMER's Perſon; having received a Taſte from the inexhauſtible Fulneſs of his Grace; O! how He longs for brighter Manifefſtations! How He thirſts after more plentiful Draughts!—None that come to *CHRIST*, are caſt out. He that awakens theſe ardent Deſires, in his due Time gives the deſired Bleſſings. After various Conflicts, a comfortable and eſtabliſhed Faith is wrought in the Penitent's Soul. He believes, that the SON of the MOST HIGH died in *his* Stead, and was obedient for *his* Juſtification. Believes, that all the unſearchable Riches of the

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adored

* *Hof.* xiii. 9.

adored MEDIATOR's Life and Death are his Portion*.

By this Faith, his Heart is purified; his Heart is quickened: He is fitted for every good Work.—Though Temptations assault Him, He derives Strength from his SAVIOUR; resists the Devil; and is faithful unto Death.—Though Corruptions defile Him, He flies to the *Fountain opened for Uncleanness* †; makes daily, hourly Application of the Blood of Sprinkling; and goes on his Way, rejoicing in GOD his SAVIOUR.

Ther. Your Discourse puts me in mind of *Abſalom's* Procedure, when *Joab* refused to make Him a Viſit. The Prince ordered his Servants to ſet on fire the General's ſtanding Corn ‡. This Stratagem had its intended Effect. The Apprehenſion of Danger *drove* Him, when the reſpectful Invitation would not lead Him,

* See this Work of Grace, and Procedure of Converſion, more copiouſly diſplayed, in a valuable little Piece intitled, *Human Nature in its fourfold State*, by Mr. *Thomas Boſton*, page 227.—Which, in my Opinion, is one of our beſt Books for common Readers. The Sentences are ſhort, and the Compariſons ſtriking. The Language is eaſy, and the Doctrine evangelical. The Method proper, the Plan comprehensive, the Manner ſearching yet conſolatory.—If another celebrated Treatiſe is ſtyled, *The whole Duty of Man*, I would call this *The WHOLE of Man*: as it comprises—what He *was* originally—what He *is* by Tranſgreſſion—what He *ſhould be* through Grace—and then what He *will be* in Glory.

† *Zech.* xiii. 1.

‡ *2 Sam.* xiv. 30.

Him, to a personal Interview. You seem to suppose, that the Law was delivered with such a Design; to lay Us under a *Necessity* of flying to the Atonement of *CHRIST*.

Asp. I do, *Theron*. And for this Opinion, I have a far better Authority, than my own Supposition. We are assured by unerring Wisdom, That *CHRIST* is the End of the Law *. It points invariably to Him. It terminates wholly in Him. And then obtains its noble Purpose, when Sinners are brought to their divine REDEEMER, for Righteousness and Strength: For that *Righteousness*, which intitles to Heaven; that *Strength*, which capacitates for Obedience.

The Law hath concluded all Mankind under Sin †. Yet not with an Intention, that any should be discouraged now, or perish for ever: but that every One may see his inexpressible Need, of a SAVIOUR's Death, and a SAVIOUR's Obedience ‡. That, being thus prepared, both to value and receive so precious

* *Rom. x. 4.*

† *Gal. iii. 22.* The sacred Original is somewhat more comprehensive than *Aspasio's* Interpretation. It is not *ἔσθλα*, but *ἔσθλα*. Which denotes *Things*, as well as *Persons*: And implies, that nothing We have, nothing We do, is free from Sin; till the Merits of *CHRIST* intervene, and the Blood of *CHRIST* be sprinkled.

‡ *Witsius*, speaking of the Law delivered at Sinai, says; *Facta est ista Fœderis Operum Commemoratio, ad' Israelitas Peccatorum & Miseriæ suæ convincendos, ex seipsis expellendos,*

ous a Blessing, *the Promise of Justification by Faith in JESUS CHRIST may be given to them that believe.*

Let Us advert to this grand Aim of the Law. Then, We shall see Goodness, unquestionable and sovereign Goodness, in forming its Constitution so *sublimely perfect*, and making its Threatenings so *inflexibly severe*. Exclusive of this wholsome Severity, We should supinely disesteem, perhaps, wantonly reject, the Grace of the Gospel.—The *prodigal Son* would never have returned to his Father, in that humble, submissive, supplicating Posture; if He had not found his Circumstances utterly ruined,

de Necessitate Satisfactionis edocendos, & ad CHRISTUM compellendos: & sic inservit Fœderi Gratia.

Animadv. Iren. p. 99.

The *Genius* and *Design* of the Law were, I think, emblematically taught, by the Circumstances attending its *Delivery*.—The Mountain, not to be trodden by any *Israelite*, or touched by any *Beast*, on pain of Death—The Voice of Thunder, and the Glare of Lightning—The Sound of the Trumpet, and the Clouds of Smoke—The vast Range of Hills and Rocks, trembling to their Center—Six hundred thousand Men struck with inexpressible Consternation—And *Moses*, even *Moses* himself, the Favourite of Heaven, terrified exceedingly—All these indicated the *righteous*, the *rigorous*, and the *awful* Import of “The Word spoken.”

Nor was the *Effect* of these astonishing Incidents, without a spiritual Meaning. The People durst not adventure upon a *personal* Approach, but had Recourse to a *Mediator*. They requested, that *Moses* might interpose; and transact Affairs, between the terrible JEHOVAH, and the guilty Congregation.—Such an Impression, the Purity and the Rigour of the Law, should make on our Hearts: should drive Us from Self to a SAVIOUR; deter Us from confiding in our *legal*, and prompt Us to seek an *evangelical* Righteousness.

DIALOGUE IX.

47

ruined, and felt Himself perishing with Hunger. No more would the conceited Sons of Adam, disclaiming all Pretence to any Merit of their own, and with nothing but the Halter * of Self-condemnation about their Necks, fall down at the Feet of a merciful REDEEMER; if they were not instigated by the sharp Goad, or rather driven by the flaming Sword of the Law.

To this agrees our celebrated Milton. Whose Divinity is as faultless, as his Poetry is matchless. You will give me Leave to quote a few of his beautiful Lines. Which recapitulate, as it were, the whole preceding Conversation: and, while they recapitulate the Conversation, confirm the Doctrine. This will make You some amends, for my late tedious Harangue. This will tip the Lead with Gold.

*So Law appears imperfect; and but giv'n
With Purpose to resign them, in full Time,
Up to a better Cov'nant; disciplin'd
From shadowy Types to Truth; from Flesh to
Spirit;*

*From Imposition of strict Laws, to free
Acceptance of large Grace; from servile Fear,
To filial; Works of Law, to Works of Faith†.*

* Alluding to those remarkable Words of Benhadad's Servants; *Let Us put Sack-cloth upon our Loins, and Ropes upon our Heads, and go out to meet the King of Israel; peradventure He will save thy Life.* 1 Kings xx. 31.

† B. XII. 300.

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DIALOGUE X.

ASPASIO.

AGAIN, *Theron*! Must we never lay aside the Weapons of Controversy?—You put me in mind of the resolute *Athenian*; who, having fought with distinguished Bravery on the Field of *Marathon*, pursued the vanquished *Persians* to their Fleet. At that very Instant, a Galley full of the Enemies Troops, was putting off to Sea. Determined, if possible, to prevent their Escape, He laid hold on the Vessel with his Right-hand. Which was no sooner fixed, than chopped off by the Sailors. The Warrior, not at all discouraged, seized it with his left. When that also was cut away, He fastened his Teeth in its Side; and never quitted his Gripe, till He resigned his Breath*.

Ther.

* The *Athenian's* Name was *Cynagyrus*. The Author, who relates this extraordinary Story, is *Justin*. If the Reader should

Ther. I have been reconsidering the Case of *imputed Righteousness*; and am by no means satisfied, as to the Propriety of the Phrase, or the Truth of the Doctrine; especially, in the Sense which You espouse.—Objections arise, more substantial and weighty, than any that have hitherto been urged. And which, if I mistake not, You will find it a more difficult Task to answer.

Ass. I must do my best. And if my best Attempts prove unsuccessful, I shall say with the gallant *Iphicrates*, when overpowered by the Eloquence of his Antagonist; “My Adversary is the better Actor, but mine is the better Play.”

I say *better*—For, to You, *Theron*, I will freely own, what to another Person I should not be so willing to disclose; That I receive no Comfort, but from the habitual Belief, and daily Application of this precious Doctrine.—Whenever I read the most *correct* and *beautiful* Writings, that proceed in the contrary Strain, I feel my Spirits heavy; I find my Prospects gloomy; and not one Ray of Consolation gleams upon my Mind. Whereas, *much meaner* Compositions, which breathe the Savour of this evangelical Unction, seldom fail

should think it a *Rhodomontade*, I believe, He will not judge amiss. And I promise myself, the same good Sense will enable Him to distinguish, between what is *hinted* by way of *Pleasantry*, and what is *urged* by way of *Argument*.

44 DIALOGUE X.

fail to quicken my Hopes; to brighten my Views; and put into my Mouth that piously alert Profession of the Psalmist, *I will run the Way of thy Commandments, now thou hast set my Heart at liberty* *.—Though I am far from laying any considerable Stress upon this Observation; farther still from advancing it into the Place of an Argument; yet I may be permitted to mention it, in the Confidence and Familiarity of Friendship.

Ther. An Opinion proposed with so much Modesty, and so nearly connected with my *Aspasie's* Comfort, has doubtless a Claim to my serious Attention. Otherwise, it might possibly provoke my Raillery. For, You must know, I am no great Admirer of inward Feelings. I cannot think them a very solid Method of demonstrating your Point. It must be enforced by better Reasons, if You would gain it Access to *my Heart*.

We must place, You say, a Dependence upon the *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, in all that He has *done and suffered*. This, You add, is our only justifying Righteousness: the only Method to obtain Pardon of our Sins, and Life eternal.

Asp. I do, *Theron*. This being the Righteousness of *GOD*, is—

Ther. Give me Leave, before You proceed farther, to propose a Query. Does the Righteousness

* *Psal.* cxix. 32.

teousness of GOD signify the active and passive Obedience of *CHRIST*?

Asp. Righteousness is a Conformity to the Law, in Heart, and in Life. As the SON of GOD voluntarily made Himself subject to the Law; perfectly fulfilled its Precepts; and suffered to the utmost its Penalty; this, I should imagine, furnishes Us with the *truest* and *noblest* Signification of the Phrase.

Theo. What, if I or Others should imagine quite the Reverse?

Asp. I thank my Friend for his Admonition. It is indeed unreasonable, that *my bare* Imagination should pass for Orthodoxy and Truth. Let Us then inquire after better Proof.

When the divine Name, in the sacred Phraseology, is added to a Substantive, it expresses some very extraordinary Property.—*The Trees of the LORD**, denote those stately and magnificent Forests, which the Hand of the MOST HIGH planted.—*The Mountains of GOD†*, are those prodigiously large Elevations of the Earth, which none but an Almighty Arm could establish.—The Righteousness of GOD likewise means, A Righteousness of the *most supereminent* Dignity; such as is worthy to be called by his Name; and may justly challenge his Acceptance. And where shall We find this,

* *Psal.* civ. 16.

† This is the Import of the Original, *הרי אלהים*, *Psal.* xxxvi. *ver.* 7. *Heb.* *ver.* 6. *Eng.*

this, but in the Conduct and Person of his blessed SON?—This has a most unexceptionable Claim to the exalted Title: being, as a masterly Critic explains the Phrase, “A Righteousness devised by GOD the FATHER, from all Eternity; wrought out by GOD the SON, in the Person of *JESUS CHRIST*, applied by GOD the HOLY GHOST, to the Sinner’s Soul.”

Ther. This Doctrine of yours, if I rightly understand it, would make Remission of Sins, but one *half* of our Justification; and something else necessary, in order to obtain eternal Life. Which is just as rational, as to suppose, That though one Cause may expel Darkness, another must supervene, in order to introduce Light.

Asp. The Nature of Justification, and the Nature of Condemnation, are two *Opposites*, which will mutually illustrate each other.—What is implied in the Condemnation of a Sinner? He forfeits eternal Life, and is doomed to eternal Death.—What is included in the Justification of a Sinner? It supercedes his Obligation to Punishment, and invests Him with a Title to Happiness.—In order to the *first*, there must be a Remission of Sins. In order to the *second*, an Imputation of Righteousness. *Both* which are derived from *CHRIST*’s Mediation in our Behalf; and *both* take place, when

when we are united to that divine HEAD.—
So that We do not derive them from two different Sources, but ascribe them to one and the same great, all-sufficient CAUSE.

Your Comparison, though intended to overthrow, I think, fully establishes the Sentiment.—When yonder bright Orb makes his first Appearance in the East, what Effects are produced? The Shades of Night are dispersed, and the Light of Day is diffused.—To what are they owing? Each to a separate, or both to the same Origin? Every one's Experience will answer the Question. Thus, when the *Sun of Righteousness* arises in the Soul, He brings at once Pardon and Acceptance. Remission and Salvation are under his Wings. Both which constitute the *Healing* * of the Nations: and both owe their Being to *CHRIST*'s Obedience, embraced as active, and not rejected as passive.

Tber. This, I know, is the fine-spun Theory of your systematic Divines. But where is their *Warrant* from Scripture? By what Authority do they introduce such subtle Distinctions?

Ass. I cannot think the Distinction so subtle, or the Theory so finely spun. To be released from the *damnatory* Sentence, is one Thing; to be treated as a *righteous* Person, is evidently another.—*Abalom* was pardoned, when He received

* *Mal. iv. 2.*

received a Permission to remove from *Geshur*, and dwell at *Jerusalem*. But this was very different from the Recommencement of filial Duty, and parental Endearment *. A Rebel may be exempted from the capital Punishment, which his traiterous Practices deserve; without being restored to the Dignity of his former State, or the Rights of a loyal Subject. In *Christianity* likewise, to be freed from the Charge of Guilt, and to be regarded as a righteous Person, are two several Blessings; really distinct in themselves, and often distinguished in Scripture.

Ther. Where are they distinguished? In what Texts of Scripture? This is what I called for—your scriptural Warrant.

Asp. What think You of *Job's* Reply to his censorious Friends? *GOD forbid, that I should justify You †!* That He forgave them, there is no Doubt. Yet he could not justify them: could not allow their Reflections to be equitable, or their Behaviour charitable.

What think You of *Solomon's* Supplication? *Then bear Thou in Heaven, and do, and judge thy Servants; condemning the Wicked, to bring his Way upon his Head; and justifying the Righteous, to give Him according to his Righteousness ‡.*

To

* 2 Sam. xiv. 24.

† Job xxvii. 5. *Vos justos in Causâ vestrâ adversus me pronuntiem.* Schult.

‡ 1 Kings viii. 32.

To condemn, in this Passage, evidently signifies to pronounce guilty, and obnoxious to Punishment. By Parity of Reason, to *justify* must denote to pronounce righteous, and intitled to Happiness.

What says Solomon's Father? *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, O LORD! For, in thy Sight, shall no Man living be justified**. A Man might be *pardoned*, if judged according to the Tenour of his own Obedience, and found guilty. *Justified*, or declared righteous, He could not be, without the Imputation of some Righteousness better than his own.

From all which Passages I conclude, That to be justified or pronounced righteous, is different from, is superior to, the bare Remission of Sin.

Ther. All these Instances are derived from the *Old Testament*: the *New*, if I mistake not, speaks another Language. Consider the Case of the penitent *Publican*. What does He request? *GOD be merciful to me a Sinner!* What does He obtain? *He went down to his House justified†*. If then the Petition and the Grant may be deemed correspondent, Pardon and Justification must be reckoned equivalent.

Ans. The Old and the New Testament are, in their Style and Contents, exactly correspondent.

* *Psal. cxliii. 2.* † *Luke xviii. 13, 14.*

pondent. *Echo*, in yonder Cloysters, does not more punctually reverberate the Speaker's Voice, than those divine Books harmonize with each other.

But it does not follow, from the *Publican's* Request and the *Publican's* Blessing, That Pardon and Justification are the same. Only, that GOD's Bounty frequently *exceeds* our Prayers, and is larger than our Expectations; or, that the Blessing which was implored, and the Blessing which was vouchsafed, are *inseparably* connected, and always accompany each other.

St. Paul mentions *A Justification of Life*: not barely an Exemption from the Sentence of Death; but such a Justification, as gives a *Title* * to the Reward of Life. The Words are very emphatical. We shall injure the Dignity of their Meaning, if We understand them in a more contracted Sense.—Towards the Close of the same Chapter, We have another Passage, rich with Consolation, and full to our Purpose. *Grace reigneth through Righteousness unto eternal Life* †: Here, is pointed out the *prime Source* of all our Blessings, infinitely free and rich *Grace*: The *meritorious Cause*, not any Works of Man, not any Qualifications of our own, but the perfect *Righteousness*

* Rom. v. 18. Δικαιωσις ζωης est Declaratio divini illa, qua Peccator, Mortis reus, Vitæ adjudicatur, idque jure. Bengel. in loc.

† Rom. v. 21.

zealousness of our LORD JESUS CHRIST:

The *Effect* or *End* of all; which is, not barely an Absolution from Guilt, but an Instatement in Life; a Life of holy Communion with GOD in this World, to be crowned with an eternal Fruition of Him in another.

Let me produce one Text more, which just at this Instant occurs to my Memory. You will find it, in the Apostle's Defence of Himself, before *Festus* and *Agrippa*. He opens, as it were, his apostolical Commission, and repeats the Words of his royal MASTER. *I send thee to ignorant and enslaved, guilty and ruined Creatures; to turn them from Darknes to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto GOD; that they may receive Forgiveness of Sins, and Inheritance among all them which are sanctified by Faith that is in me* *. The great Preacher of the *Gentiles*, or rather the supreme LORD of all Preachers, has distinguished between *Remission of Sins*, and the *Inheritance of Saints*; between the *Pardon* that delivers from Hell, and the *Justification* that intitles to Heaven. So that the former does by no means constitute the latter; but is connected † with it, as a Link in the same sacred Chain; or included in it, as Part of the same glorious Whole.

Ther.

* *Acts* xxvi. 18.

† Vid. *Wiss. Oecon. Lib.* III. *Cap.* viii. *Secl.* 46.

Ther. Admitting your Distinction to be just, Is not the Satisfaction, made by the Death of *CHRIST*, sufficient of *itself* to obtain, both our full Pardon, and our final Happiness?

Assp. Since my Friend has started the Question, I may venture, with all Reverence to the divine Counsels, to answer in the Negative: it being necessary, that the REDEEMER of Men should *obey*, as well as *suffer*, in their Stead.—For this We have the Testimony of our LORD Himself. *This Commandment*, says He, *have I received of my FATHER, that I should lay down my Life* *. Thus it becometh Us, adds He in another Place, *to fulfil all Righteousness* †. To which his Apostle subjoins; that, if We *reign in Life*, it must be, not only through those Sufferings which expiate, but also *through that Righteousness* ‡ which merits.

Ther. Our LORD's Testimony relates only to a *positive* Institution, and is quite foreign to your Purpose.—I have often been disgusted at such strained Applications of Scripture. The Partizans of a System wrest the Holy Book. They deal with divine Truth, as the Tyrant *Procrustes* served those unhappy Creatures, who fell into his merciless Hands. Is a Text too short, to suit their Purpose? Our *Procrustean* Expositors can stretch it on the Rack,

* *John* x. 18. † *Mass.* iii. 15. ‡ *Rom.* v. 17.

Rack, and lengthen its Sense. Is it too full, to consist with their Scheme? They can lop off a Limb, secrete a Sentence, or contract the Meaning.—Is this to reverence the great GOD? Is this to treat respectfully the divine Word?

Ans. I have been grieved, I assure You, and disgusted at this Practice, as well as Yourself. A Practice, not only very irreverent, but very injudicious also. It really prejudices the Cause, it would unfairly recommend. Such a Support, is like *a broken Tooth, or a Foot out of joint**; not only unserviceable, but hurtful; an Obstruction, rather than a Furtherance.—However, I am not conscious of committing any Violence on this Passage, or of forcing it into my Service. The Circumstance You object, rather strengthens, than invalidates the Conclusion. If it was so requisite for our blessed MEDIATOR, to observe a *positive* Institution; how much more necessary, to fulfil those *moral* Precepts, whose Obligation is unalterable and everlasting.

Besides; it should be considered, Whether *CHRIST*'s Sufferings were a complete Satisfaction of the Law? Complete they were, with regard to the *Penalty*, not with regard to the *Precept*. A Distinction obvious and important. From whence arises the follow-

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ing

* *Prov.* xxv. 19.

ing Argument ; which, for once, You will allow me to propose in the *logical* Form.

By what alone the Law was not satisfied ; by that alone Sinners could not be justified :

By *CHRIST*'s Sufferings alone, the Law was not satisfied :

Therefore, by *CHRIST*'s Sufferings alone, Sinners could not be justified.

But when We join the active with the passive Obedience of our LORD ; the Efficacy of the One, with the Perfection of the Other ; how does our Justification stand firm, in the *fullest* Sense of the Word ! We have *all* that the Law demands, both for our Exemption from the Curse, and as a Title to the Blessing.

Ther. Does not the Scripture ascribe the *Whole* of our Salvation to the Death of *CHRIST* ? Delivering it, as a never to be forgotten Maxim in *Christianity* ; That *We have Redemption through his Blood* * : *are brought near through the Blood of CHRIST* † : nay, that *We are justified* (the very Point under Debate) *through his Blood* ‡.—Would the inspired Writer have assigned these various Blessings to this *one* Cause ; if it had been a Price inadequate to the Purchase, or a Means insufficient to accomplish the End ?

Asp. This *Part* of our LORD's meritorious Humiliation, is, by a very usual Figure, put for

* *Eph.* i. 7. † *Eph.* ii. 13. ‡ *Rom.* v. 9.

for the *Whole*. The Death of *CHRIST* includes, not only his Sufferings, but his Obedience. The Shedding of his precious Blood, was at once the grand Instance of his Suffering, and the finishing Act of his Obedience. In this View it is considered, and thus it is interpreted, by his own Ambassador. Who, speaking of his divine MASTER, says, *He was obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross* *.

By the same Figure, Faith is sometimes said to be a lively influential Belief, *That CHRIST died for our Sins* †. At other Times, it is represented, as a firm practical Belief, *That GOD hath raised Him from the Dead* ‡. Neither of which can, without the utmost Contrariety to the Analogy of Scripture, be taken in the *exclusive* Sense. Each Act must be understood, not separately, but jointly. Each as implying both, or reciprocally inferring one another.

In like manner, when the Scripture ascribes our Justification to the Death of *CHRIST*; We are not to think, that it would *set aside*, but *imply* his Obedience. It is not because his active Obedience has no Concern, in procuring the Blessing; but because his bitter Passion was the most conspicuous, and the completing Stage of his ever-glorious Undertaking. Then,

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and

* *Phil. ii. 8.*† *1 Cor. xv. 3.*‡ *Rom. x. 9.*

and not till then, He could truly say ; FATHER, *I have finished the Work, Thou gavest me to do* *.

Ther. According to your Account then, it should be possible for a Man to have all his Sins done away, yet not attain to *complete* Justification. Which is as contrary to sound Sense, and true Divinity, as to imagine, that Crookedness may be removed, and the Object not become straight.

Asp. No, *Theron.* According to my Account, it is impossible, that the active and passive Obedience of our REDEEMER should be disjoined. To whomsoever the one is imputed, from Him the other is not withheld. They were *undivided* in *CHRIST* the illustrious Head, and they are *undivided* in their Application to his mystical Body. As *CHRIST* in suffering obeyed, and in obeying suffered ; so, whoever receives *CHRIST* as an Atonement, receives Him also as a Righteousness.

This has been observed before ; and if this be real Fact, what an *inestimably precious* Gift, is the Gift of *CHRIST* ! Never was the most sovereign Remedy, so admirably suited to any Malady, as this is adapted to all our Wants. In HIM may We be found, living and dying ! How safe, how happy then !—Let me not weary your Patience, if I repeat a Passage from

* *John xvii. 4.*

from our excellent Dr. *Lightfoot*. Which, though artless and remarkably simple, has very much affected my Mind; and, I hope, will leave some valuable Impression on my Friend's.

"Justification, says that judicious Divine, is
 "a Man's being interested in all CHRIST's
 "Righteousness. And if any Thing is to be
 "longed for, sure that is, to be interested in
 "all CHRIST's Righteousness."

Ther. You don't weary my Patience; neither do You satisfy my Doubts. For You take no Notice of the *Absurdity* objected; and the Comparison that inforces it.

Ass. Your Comparison, my dear Friend, is not founded on a *parallel* Case. Neither Sense, nor Philosophy find a Medium, between the Removal of Crookedness, and the Succession of Straightness. But Reason discerns an *apparent*, and Revelation maintains an *important* Difference, between the Pardon of Guilt, and a Title to Life. This has already been proved from Scripture; and is, to me at least, evident from the very Nature of Things. For, if a King, in Favour of some condemned Malefactor, revoke the Sentence of Death; this is one very considerable Act of Clemency. But if He pleases to make the pardoned Criminal, a *Partaker* of his Kingdom, or an *Heir* of his Crown: This surely is a new, and a much higher Instance of royal Bounty.

If

○ If You insist upon a *Similitude*, the holy Word of GOD, which always speaks with consummate Propriety, will furnish Us with one. *Zecbariab* illustrates the Doctrine of Justification. He represents the Sinner, by a Person arrayed in *filthy Garments*. His Pardon is described by *taking away* this sordid Apparel. By which Benefit, He ceases to be defiled; yet is He not hereby clothed; yet is He not hereby justified. This is an additional Blessing; signified by putting on *Change of Raiment**, and wearing beautiful Robes.—Here, the Circumstances tally. The two constituent Parts of Justification, are severally displayed, and strongly marked. Here We have the Removal of Filth, and the Robe of Righteousness; that which frees Us from being abhorred, and that which renders Us accepted. Which, though distinguishable in themselves, and distinguished by the sacred Writer, are always united in the divine Donation.

Ther. This Notion is founded on a *chimerical* Covenant, that *CHRIST* would take upon Him the Obedience due from Man, of which there is not the least Intimation in holy Scripture.

Assp. That *CHRIST* undertook every Thing necessary, to redeem lost Sinners from Guilt and

* *Zech. iii. 3, 4, 5.*

and Condemnation ; every Thing necessary, to procure for attainted Rebels a fresh Title to Life and Glory ; this cannot be reckoned chimerical. This must be as real, as that lost Sinners are redeemed, or attainted Rebels restored. Every Proof of the one, proves and establishes the other. This is what We call a *Covenant* ; and, from its benign Nature and blessed End, THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

To this grand Transaction, there are frequent Allusions in Scripture. Whence is it, that Believers are said to have been given by the FATHER to CHRIST? *Thine they were, and Thou gavest Them to me* *. Does not such Language, suppose the Existence of some previous Contract, and refer to one of its delightful Articles?—With what Kind of Justice could the FATHER lay † our Iniquities upon the holy JESUS, unless He had *consented* to be answerable for our Guilt?

In the Prophecy of *Zechariah*, this Covenant and the Parties, are particularly mentioned. *The Counsel of Peace shall be between them both* ‡ : The mysterious and unsearchable Contrivance for the Recovery of ruined Man,

as

* *John* xvii. 6. † *Isai.* liii. 6.

‡ *Zech.* vi. 12, 13. These two Verses contain a brief, but very fine Description of the REDEEMER; of his Person, his Office, and his Glory; together with the noble Cause, and blessed Fruit of our Redemption.

His

as it has been concerted, shall be carried in Execution—by Whom? By the LORD Almighty, or GOD the FATHER; and that illustrious Person, who is to *build the Temple, and bear the Glory*. A Character, which None can claim; a Task, to which None is equal; but the blessed JESUS only.

In

His Person: He is *the Man*; or, as the Hebrew imports, the *real*, but, at the same Time, the *illustrious Man*.—*Whose Name is the Branch*; being the new Origin of a new Race; the Father of a spiritual Seed, who are Children, not of the Flesh, but of the Promise.—A Branch that shall spring, not from a common Root, not from any human Planting, but *from under Himself*; being born of a pure Virgin, and by the Power of his own SPIRIT, He shall be both Stock and Stem to Himself.

His Office: It is to *build the Temple*, the Church of the Elect; which is the House of the living GOD. In which he dwells, and by Whom He is worshipped. Laying the Foundation of this spiritual Edifice in his Cross, and cementing it with his Blood.—Which He shall rule as a *King*, after having redeemed it as a *Priest*; uniting the sacerdotal Censer with the regal Diadem, and being a *Priest upon his Throne*. Hence proceeds his *Glory*: For, he *stands* not, like other Priests, offering daily the same Oblations; but having, by one Sacrifice, obtained eternal Redemption for Us, is *set down* at the Right-hand of the MAJESTY on High.

What is the *Cause* of these great Events? What, but that most sacred and august Convention, *the Council of Peace*? Which was settled *between them both*; between the LORD JEHOVAH on one Hand, and the Man whose Name is the *Branch* on the other.—Called a *Council*, from the intire Consent, which actuated each Party; and the transcendent Wisdom, displayed in the whole Scheme.—The Council of *Peace*, because of its sovereign Efficacy, to make Peace with an offended GOD, Peace in the accusing Conscience, Peace among People of jarring Tempers and discordant Principles.

In *Pſalm* the xlth, the *Conditions* of the Covenant are circumſtantiſhly recorded : Which were the Incarnation and Obedience of the eternal SON : *A Body haſt Thou prepared me. Lo ! I come to do thy Will* *.—The *Accompliſhment* of theſe Conditions, is alledged and pleaded by our great MEDIATOR, in the Introduction to his laſt ſolemn Prayer †. What He implores, in the Proceſs of his Supplications, may be looked upon as the *Recompence* ‡, decreed Him by the FATHER, and ſtipulated in this glorious Treaty. *Implores*, did I ſay ? 'Tis very obſervable, that our LORD makes a *Demand*, rather than a *Requeſt*. The Expreſſion is not *ερωτω*, but *θελω* || : A Word of Authority, not of Supplication. He claims what, by the FATHER's Engagement, and by his own Obedience, was become his unqueſtionable Right.

Ther. This you call the Covenant of Grace : But if We are juſtified by *CHRIST*'s fulfilling of the Law, We are juſtified by Works. So that, before You can ſtrike out ſuch a Way of Salvation, You muſt *contradiet* Yourſelf : And, what is more adventurous, You muſt aboliſh that fundamental Principle of the Goſpel ;

* *Heb.* x. 5, 7.

† *John* xvii.

‡ This *Recompence* is ſpecified and promiſed, in another authentic Copy of the ſame grand Treaty, recorded *Iſai.* xlix. 1—6.

|| Not I *beg*, but I *will*. *John* xvii. 24. *Sic volo, ſic jubeo*.

spel; *By the Works of the Law, shall no Flesh be justified.*

Assp. I grant it, *Theron*: We are justified by Works. But whose? The Works of *CHRIST*, not our own. And this is very far from contradicting Ourselves; equally far is it from abolishing, what You call the *Gospel-principle*. Which, though an undeniable Truth, is not an evangelical Doctrine. Because, it only shews Us our ruined State, and the utter Impossibility of relieving Ourselves. Whereas, nothing is *genuine Gospel*, but what speaks Recovery and Comfort.

Between the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace, this, I apprehend, is the Difference: By the former, Man was indispensibly bound to obey, in his *own Person*. By the latter, the Obedience of *his Surety* is accepted, instead of his own. The Righteousness required by both, is, not *sincere*, but *complete*; not proportioned to the Abilities of fallen Man, but to the Purity of the Law, and the Majesty of the Lawgiver.—By this means, the Glory of GOD as an awful Sovereign, and the Glory of his Law as an inviolable System, are intirely preserved and illustriously displayed. The Salvation of Sinners, neither clashes with the Truth, nor interferes with the Justice of the supreme LEGISLATOR. On the contrary, it becomes
a *faith-*

a faithful and just * Procedure of the most High GOD, to justify *Him that believeth on JESUS.*

Ther. When You make this Difference between the two Covenants, where is your Authority from Scripture? Which of the sacred Writers have taught Us, that, though one demanded personal, the other is content with vicarious Obedience?

Asp. Which, *Theron*?—*The first Three.* The most eminent Historian; the most inraptured Poet; and the most zealous Preacher. I need not inform You, that I mean *Moses, David,* and *Paul.*

The Testimony of *David* has been already recited.—*Moses* gives Us a concise, but very instructive Account of the second Covenant. With *Whom*, according to his Representation, was it made? Not with *Adam*, or any of his Posterity; but with the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the Room and Stead of both. None of the Articles are proposed to a poor, impotent, ruined Creature; but the whole is consigned over to the interposing SAVIOUR, significantly described by *the Seed of the Woman.* It is not said, “Thy best Endeavours, O *Adam*,
“thy true Repentance and sincere Obedience,
“shall retrieve this fatal Miscarriage; But,
“*the Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's*
“*Head:*

"Head": the SON of the MOST HIGH,
 "by taking thy Nature, submitting to thy
 "Obligations, and suffering Death for thy
 "Sins, shall fully repair thy Loss."

CHRIST, We see, undertook to execute the Conditions. CHRIST was our Representative in this great Transaction. For which Reason He is styled by St. Paul, *The second Man* †, and *the Surety of a better Covenant* ‡.—Our Help being laid upon ONE, that is so mighty; upon ONE, that is so faithful; the Covenant is said to be, *In all Things well ordered and sure* §. Admirably well ordered indeed, for the Comfort of the Christian, and the Security of his Salvation.—"Tis true, may He argue, "I cannot fulfil the Conditions; and 'tis "equally true, that this is not required at my "Hands. The LORD JESUS CHRIST, of "his adorably rich Goodness, has performed "all that was conditional §; and has esta-
 blished,

* Gen. iii. 15. † 1 Cor. xv. 48. ‡ Heb. vii. 22.
 § 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

§ *Wetius*, instead of representing the Covenant of Grace as a chimerical Thing, most affectionately and charmingly displays its Excellency; *Si quicquam ergo attentissima Consideratione dignum conferi debeat, sane id Facius Gratia est. Hic Via ostenditur ad meliorem terrestri Paradisum, & ad certiores stabilioremque Felicitatem, eâ qua Adamus exiit. Hic nova Spes perditis Mortalibus allucet, quæ eo gratior esse debet, quo inexpectatior evenit. Hic Conditiones offeruntur, quibus æterna Salus annexa est; Conditiones non a Nobis rursus præstandæ, quod Animum despondere faceret; sed ab EO, qui Vitâ non excedet, antequam vere dixerit, Consummatum est.*

De Econ. Lib. II. Cap. I.

"blished, for me and for his People, a *valid*
"Title to the Promises, the Privileges, and —

Ther. "Has thereby released me from all
"Obligation to Duty."—Farewel then to our
own Obedience. No more Occasion for any
Holiness of Life. Fine Divinity truly! Should
I not rather say? Downright *Antinomianism*!

Ass. No, my Friend: *CHRIST* came not to
destroy the Law, but to fulfil*. He has fulfilled
it, to the very uttermost, in his own Person.
He has also merited for Us, and conveys to
Us, those Supplies of the SPIRIT, which
alone can enable Us to yield faithful and ac-
ceptable Obedience.

What is the Tenour of this Covenant? "I
"will put my Laws into their Minds, and on
"their Hearts will I write them†. They shall
"discern such a Beauty and Glory in my Pre-
"cepts, as will engage their Desires, and win
"their Affections. So that it shall be no
"longer their Burden, but their Delight, even
"their Meat and Drink, to do the Will of
"their FATHER in Heaven."—This, this
is one of the Privileges, purchased by our great
MEDIATOR. And to me it seems wondrous
strange, that the Purchase of an Estate for
any Person, should be reckoned the sure
Means, to deprive Him of the Possession, or
debar Him from the Enjoyment.

How

* Matt. v. 17.

† Heb. viii. 10.

How often is this *weak Surmise* urged as an Argument? All whose Plausibility is owing, to a palpable Mistake, or an egregious Fallacy; to a supposed Separation of Things, which are absolutely inseparable; I mean our Justification and our Sanctification *.—You are a Philosopher, *Theron*. Try, if You can separate *Gravity* from the Stone, or *Heat* from the Fire. If these Bodies and their essential Properties, are indissolubly connected; so are a genuine Faith, and a conscientious Obedience. To suppose them disunited, is as contrary to *sound Divinity*; as it would be contrary to *true Philosophy*, if You should talk of a burning Substance that has no Warmth, or of a solid Substance that has no Weight.—Never therefore, my dear Friend, repeat this stale Objection; never propagate this ungrounded † Clamour; nor adopt a Cavil, which is altogether as unphilosophical, as it is anti-evangelical.

Ther.

* See *Isai.* xlv. 24. *1 Cor.* i. 30. *1 Cor.* vi. 13. Where these Blessings walk Hand in Hand; and never *were*, never *will*, never *can* be parted.

† This puts me in mind of what *Theodorus* replied to *Philocles*; who was often insinuating, that He preached *licentious Doctrine*; because He enlarged, with peculiar Assiduity, upon Faith in *JESUS CHRIST*; and frequently chose such Texts as, *Believe in the LORD JESUS, and Thou shalt be saved.*

“ I preach Salvation by *JESUS CHRIST*; and give
“ me Leave to ask, Whether You know, what Salvation
“ by *CHRIST* means?”—*Philocles* paused. He began to blush; would have eluded the Question, and declined an Answer.—“ No, said *Theodorus*: You must permit me to insist
“ upon

Ther. We digress from the Point. My principal Objection is not satisfied. I was observing that, according to *your* Manner of stating the Affair, Salvation is no longer free, but founded upon Works.—They are the Works of the Law, though *CHRIST* performs them. To maintain, that We are justified by these Works, is to confound the Difference between the Law and the Gospel.

Assp. Though We should admit your Premises, We cannot acquiesce in your Conclusion. The same Righteousness, by which We are justified, is both legal and evangelical. *Legal*, in respect to *CHRIST*, who was made under the Law, that He might obey all its Commands. *Evangelical*, in respect to Us, who work not Ourselves, but believe in the great FULFILLER of all Righteousness.—This is much of the same Nature, with that

other
 “ upon a Reply. Because, if it be a *right* one, it will justify
 “ me and my Conduct: if it be a *wrong* one, it will prove,
 “ that You blame You know not what; and have more
 “ Reason to inform yourself, than to censure others.”

This disconcerted Him still more. Upon which *Theoderus* proceeded. “ Salvation by *CHRIST* means, not only a
 “ Deliverance from the *Guilt*, but also from the *Power* of
 “ Sin. *HE* gave Himself for Us, that He might redeem Us
 “ from all Iniquity; redeem Us from our vain Conversation, as
 “ well as deliver Us from the Wrath to come.—Go now,
 “ *Philocles*, and tell the World, that by teaching these
 “ Doctrines, I promote the Cause of Licentiousness. And
 “ You will be just as *rational*, just as *candid*, just as *true*,
 “ as if You should affirm; That the *Firemen*, by playing the
 “ Engine, and pouring in Water, burnt your House to the
 “ Ground, and laid your Furniture in Ashes.”

other momentous Distinction in Divinity; Salvation is freely given, yet dearly bought. *Freely given*, with regard to Us; *dearly bought*, with regard to *CHRIST*. So, We are justified *by Works*, if You look forward to our Surety: We are justified *without Works*, if You cast a retrospective View on Ourselves.

Theron was silent. *Aspasio*, after a short Interval, renewed the Discourse.—I know not, whether my Friend is yielding to my Arguments, or searching after Objections; deliberating upon a Capitulation, or mustering his Forces for a fresh Sally. However, let me take this Opportunity of dropping a Hint, and suggesting a Caution.

The grand Reason, which inclines some People to reject this comfortable Doctrine, lies concealed, if not in an absolute Disbelief of our LORD's eternal Glory and GOD-HEAD, yet in *unsettled* Apprehensions of it, or an habitual *Inattention* to it.—If our SAVIOUR was not really GOD, as some Writers, unhappily mistaken themselves, endeavour to persuade the World; it would be a reasonable Practice, and intirely consistent with their Scheme, to disavow the Imputation of his Righteousness. Because, upon such a Supposition, his Obedience was no more than bounden Duty; in which there could not be
the

the least Pretence to Merit, and which could be profitable to None but Himself.—Whereas, if We verily believe Him to be the incarnate GOD, his Submission to the Law becomes an Act of *voluntary* Humiliation. Which Circumstance, together with the *transcendent* Dignity of his Person, render his Obedience, not meritorious only, but inexpressibly and *infinitely* meritorious.

As the Blood of *CHRIST* is called GOD's *own Blood**; so the Obedience of *CHRIST* was performed in the Person of that adorable MEDIATOR, *who is GOD over all*†. He acted through the whole Course of his Life, and suffered Death at the last, not merely as Man, but as GOD-Man; as JEHOVAH-JESUS; IMMANUEL.—Let me intreat You to remember, nay, let me intreat You never to forget, this *all-important* Article of our Faith. And may the blessed SPIRIT of Wisdom give Us an Understanding, to know the weighty, the extensive Influence of so glorious a Truth!

Ther. Far be it from me, to derogate from the Dignity of our SAVIOUR's Person, or to depreciate the Merits of his mediatorial Office. Place them as high, as Words can reach; exalt them as far, as Thought can soar; I steadfastly believe, You will still fall short, un-

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measur-

* *Act*. xx. 28.

† *Rom.* ix. 5.

measurably short, of their real Worth.—But this Consideration seems to increase the Absurdity of your Notion. For, if *CHRIST*'s Righteousness, *his very* Righteousness be imputed; then, the true Believers are altogether as righteous, as *CHRIST* himself. Whereas, if You maintain, that his Righteousness is imputed only *as to its Effects*, You will keep clear of this Rock.

Ass. This, I fear, will be like keeping clear of *Scylla*, only to fall foul upon *Charybdis*.—What are the Effects of the *MEDIATOR*'s Righteousness? Pardon of Sin, Justification of our Persons, and the Sanctification of our Nature. Shall We say, These Effects, these Benefits are imputed?—To *talk* of their Imputation, I think, is an Affront to sound Sense; as, I am sure, to be *put off* with their Imputation, would be a fatal Disappointment of our Hopes.—All these Benefits are, not imputed, but imparted; they are not reckoned to Us, but are really enjoyed by Us; ours they are, not barely in the divine Estimation, but by proper and personal Possession.

Yet, it does by no means follow, that Believers are altogether as righteous, as *CHRIST* Himself: unless You can prove, that to be the *Receiver* is, in all Respects the same, as to be the *Author* and *Finisher* *.—The Righteousness

* *Heb.* xii. 2.

ousness of *CHRIST* arises wholly from Himself, the Source of ours subsists in Another. *CHRIST*'s Righteousness is originally and absolutely *his own*; whereas, it is made ours in a way of Favour and gracious Imputation. Circumstances these, which create a material Difference, which yield Room for a vast Pre-eminence.

Ther. But if *CHRIST*'s perfect Obedience be accounted ours, methinks, We should have no more Need of *pardon*ing Mercy, than *CHRIST* himself.

Ap. Yes; because, *before* this Imputation, We were sunk in Guilt, and dead in Sins. Because, *after* it, We are defective in our Duty, and in many Things offend.

Ther. Does not this Doctrine render the Intercession of our SAVIOUR *superfluous*? What Occasion have *they* for an Advocate with the FATHER, whose Righteousness has neither Blemish nor Imperfection?

Ap. They stand in need of an Advocate; first, that they may be brought Home to *the REPAIRER of their Breaches* *, and made Partakers of his Righteousness by a living Faith. Next, that their Faith may be preserved, notwithstanding all Opposition, steadfast and immoveable; or rather, may be carried on, victorious and triumphant, even to the End.

E 4

Ther.

* *Isai.* lviii. 12.

Ther. You say, "CHRIST performed all that was conditional;" then He *repented* for Us, and *believed* for Us. This must be admitted in Pursuance of your Principles. But this is so wild a Notion, so contrary to Reason and Scripture, that to mention it, is to refute it.

Asp. CHRIST performed whatever was required by the Covenant of Works, both before it was violated, and after it had been transgressed. But neither *Repentance* nor *Faith* were comprehended in this Institution. It knew nothing of the One, and it would not admit of the Other.—It was not therefore necessary, neither indeed was it possible, for our spotless and divine LORD, to repent of Sin, or believe in a SAVIOUR. But he did unspeakably more. He put away Sin by the Sacrifice of Himself*; He is Himself the SAVIOUR of all the Ends of the Earth; and He has Power to bestow that blessed SPIRIT, which worketh Faith, and produceth Repentance.

Ther. However, from what You have advanced, *this* will unavoidably follow—That a Man is to be justified, under the Character of a notorious Transgressor of the Law; and justified under the Character of a sinless Observer of the Law. And what is this, but a glaring Inconsistency?

Asp.

* Heb. ix. 26.

Asp. Not at all inconsistent, but absolutely needful, if We consider those distinct Branches of the divine Law, the *preceptive* and the *penal*. Both which, in case of Guilt already contracted, must necessarily be satisfied.—Not at all inconsistent, but perfectly harmonious, if We take in the two *constituent Parts* of Justification, The Acquittance from Guilt, and a Title to Life. The former supposes Us to be Transgressors of the Law; and such the highest Saints in the World are. The latter requires Us to be Observers of the Law; and such must the Inheritors of Heaven be.—Much less is this inconsistent, if We consider Believers in their *personal* and *relative* Capacity; as they are in themselves, and as they are in their Surety. Notorious Transgressors in Themselves, they have a sinless Obedience in *CHRIST*. The Consciousness of *that*, will be an everlasting Motive to Humility; the Belief of *this*, an inexhaustible Source of Joy.

All this is no more inconsistent, than the Union of a gloomy Contexture, and a light-some Splendor, in those detached Clouds, which float amidst the Firmament. In themselves, they are a *louring* and *dark* Collection of Vapours; by the Impression of the Sunbeams, they are *fair* and *bright* as the polished Silver.

Ther.

Ther. After all, the Imputation taught in Scripture, is not the Imputation of *CHRIST's* Righteousness, but of our *own Faith*. Agreeably to the Apostle's express Declaration, Abraham *believed GOD, and it was imputed to Him for Righteousness* *.

Asp. This Objection admits the Thing in Dispute, though it controverts the Way and Manner of obtaining it. Admits the Necessity of some *active, positive* Righteousness, in order to our Justification. In this Particular, I am glad to agree with my *Theron*: and in this Particular, I believe, the Generality of serious People agree with Us both.—Whenever their Consciences are awakened, and seek to establish the Hope of eternal Life, they constantly turn their Eyes to *some* Righteousness: which, they apprehend, may, either in Whole or in Part, answer the Demands of the Law. Some look to their own *sincere* Obedience. Others call in to their Succour Works of *Supererogation*. My Friend would assign this Office to his *Faith*.

Ther. Is this a proper Answer to my Objection, *Aspasio*? The Text is point blank against Your Tenet. You do wisely therefore, not to confront, but to elude the Evidence.

Asp. I did not intend it for an Answer; only as an *occasional* Observation, which nevertheless—

* *Rom. iv. 3.*

vertheless has a pretty close Connection with the Subject.—Neither would I use so mean a Subterfuge, as to elude an Argument, which I could not confute. If my Friend had allowed me Leisure to explain myself, this should have been my Reply.

That a Man is not justified by Works, is a Position most clearly demonstrated, and a Doctrine most zealously inculcated by St. *Paul*. That Faith is a Work *, exerted by the human Mind, is equally certain. Unless therefore We would render the Apostle inconsistent with Himself, We must understand the Passage in a qualified Sense.—Why should We not suffer Him, to be his own Interpreter? Why should We not take the *Narrative* of his Experience, for a *Comment* on his Doctrine? He declares, that the Ground of his own Comfort, the Cause of his own Justification, was, not the *Grace* of Faith, but *the Righteousness which is of GOD* by Faith †. Not the Act of Believing, but that grand and glorious Object of a Sinner's Belief, *The LORD our Righteousness*.

Besides; what was that Faith of *Abraham*, to which the Apostle refers? and which He proposes

* So it is called by HIM, who knew what was in Man, and what were the Differences of Things; *This is THE WORK of GOD, that Ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.* John vi. 29.

† *Phil. iii. 9.*

proposes as the invariable Model of our Justification?—It was Faith in the *promised Seed*; in *JESUS CHRIST* the Righteous*. It was a firm Persuasion, that this illustrious Person should spring from his Loins; and be the Author of Forgiveness, Acceptance, and Salvation to Himself, and to a Multitude of Believers, numberless as the Stars of Heaven. Let Us tread in these Steps of the holy Patriarch, and We shall ascribe *little*, ascribe *nothing* to our Faith, but *all* to the infinitely excellent Obedience of our REDEEMER.

Tber. Sure, *Aspasio*, You will not presume to correct Inspiration! The inspired Writer makes no mention of a REDEEMER's Obedience. He says expressly and positively—*It*, that is, *Abraham's* Faith, and not any Thing else, *was counted unto Him for Righteousness*.

Asp. True, *Tberon*; as those Windows are reckoned, are counted, *The Lights* of your House. And why? Because they illuminate? No; but because they afford a Passage to the illuminating Rays. Through them, the first and best of Elements, is diffused into all your Habitation.—So *We are saved by Grace through Faith*; by Grace imputing, through Faith accepting, the Righteousness of *JESUS CHRIST*. Grace is the magnificent Source of this nobler Light; Faith is the Means of transmitting it into all the Faculties of the Soul.

When

* Compare *Gen.* xv. 5, 6, with *Gal.* iii. 16.

When our LORD declares to the diseased Woman, *Thy Faith hath made thee whole* * : how are We to understand his Words? That the Patient's Belief, and not the Agency of *CHRIST*, wrought the Cure? To suppose this, would be extremely derogatory to the Power of our great Physician. And if We ascribe Justification to the Act of Believing, this will be equally derogatory to the Obedience of our great MEDIATOR. In the *former* Case, *CHRIST* and his omnipotent Operation, were All in All. In the *latter* Case, *CHRIST* and his infinite Merit, are All in All. In *both* Cases, Faith is only the Eye to discern, or the Hand to receive, the sovereign Good.

I would farther observe, That Faith is very particularly *distinguished* from the Righteousness which justifies. We read of the Righteousness which is *by* Faith, which is *of* Faith †. A Method of speaking which plainly denotes, that Faith itself is not our justifying Righteousness.

* *Matt.* ix. 22.

† *Rom.* ix. 30. *Phil.* iii. 9. The Apostles, I believe, never make Use of such a Phrase as, *δικαιοσύνης υπερωπισμῶς*, or *διὰ τὴν πίστιν*, but *ἐκ πίστεως* or *διὰ τῆς πίστεως*. Not *for*, or on *Account* of our Faith, but *by* or *through* Faith. Making this Grace, not the procuring Cause, but only the Instrument of Application.—Such Language as the former, seems contrary to the sound Words of our LORD *JESUS CHRIST*. Yet, if *Theron's* Sense of the Text under Debate were admitted, the Doctrine contained in this unscriptural and offensive Style; is the unavoidable Consequence.

ousness.—If Faith was the Cause of our Acceptance with GOD, then We should be justified by a Righteousness, which is confessedly *imperfect*. For, who has ever attained to the highest Degree of this Virtue? Or whose Faith is not mixed with an Alloy of Unbelief?—If Faith itself was the Matter of our Justification, I see not how Boasting could be *excluded*; how the Law could be *magnified*; or what Reason the Apostle could have, to account all Things, but the Righteousness of *CHRIST*, meaner than Dross*.

Say not, that We presume to correct Inspiration. We only interpret the inspired Word in an harmonious *Consistency* with itself, This Sense is agreeable to the prevailing Doctrine, and to the current Language of Scripture.—To the prevailing Doctrine; which is *A Believing in HIM, who justifieth the Ungodly*.—To the current Language; as when GOD is called our Fear †, our Hope ‡, our Joy ||. In these Places, the *Act* is undoubtedly put for the Object. So, in the Passage before Us, the *Act* of Faith seems to denote the *Object* of Faith. It is to be understood, not absolutely, but

* *Phil.* iii. 8. The Original is σκυβαλα—A Word of the most contemptible Meaning; it signifies the *worthless* Scraps, and *serdid* Offals, that are cast to the Dogs. The Reader may see this Passage more fully explained in *Letter V.*

† *Gen.* xxxi. 42, 53. ‡ *Psal.* lxxi. 5. *Jer.* xiv. 8.
|| *Psal.* xliii. 4.

but as some Divines speak, objectively, instrumentally, relatively,

Ther. In the Name of Wonder, what can You mean by this Heap of harsh and obscure Expressions! Let me intreat You, *Aspasio*, to speak in your own Style, not in the Dialect of *Aquinas*. I have an irreconcilable Aversion to these scholastic Terms. They are the *Barbarisms* of Divinity. I know but one Use, they are fitted to serve; that is, to perplex and puzzle a Cause, You cannot maintain. Somewhat like the Liquor, which a certain Fish, when closely pursued, is said to emit: by which the Water is darkened, and the Foe eluded.

Asp. This, *Theron*, is the Meaning of our uncouth Phrases: It is not Faith itself, which justifies; but that Righteousness, which Faith continually *views*; which Faith delightfully *apprehends*; and on which it finally *terminates*.

To be plainer still—We are justified by Faith, in the same Manner, as We are fed by the Hand; or as We are said, to drink of a Cup. Neither the Hand nor the Cup are the *Cause* of our Sustenance, but the *Instruments*, one of conveying it, the other of receiving it*.—If an Apostle affirms, *We are justified*

* Though I am intirely of *Theron's* Mind, and can by no means admire our *scholastic* Divines, or their *logical* Terms; yet a Remark from *Paræus*, couched in this Style,

justified by Faith: Faith itself declares, *In the LORD I have Righteousness*. Put these Passages together, and You will have the true Sense of our Doctrine, and the true Doctrine of the Gospel.

You remember, what recommended *The-mistocles* to the Protection of King *Admetus*, when He fled from the Malice of his own Countrymen.—Not his Name; that was obnoxious—Not his Actions; they had been hostile—But the Person of the *young Prince*; whom the distressed Refugee caught up in his Arms; and, charged with these Credentials, presented Himself to the royal Parent*.—So, Faith recommends to GOD, and justifies the Soul, not for itself, or its own Worth; but

on

is so pertinent to the Purpose, and so full an Explication of the Point, that it would be an Injury to the Cause, not to make it a Part of my Notes. And some Readers, I apprehend, not much acquainted with this old-fashioned Dialect, may be well enough pleased to view a Specimen; and like it, as they do the *Rust* of a *Medal*, merely for its Uncouthness and Antiquity.

“Faith justifies, says my Author, not *effectively*, as working an habitual Righteousness in Us; not *materially*, as though it were itself the constituent Cause of our Justification; but it justifieth *objectively*, as it apprehendeth *CHRIST*; and *instrumentally*, as it applieth his Righteousness.”

* This, says *Plutarch*, was a Custom peculiar to that Country; was reckoned the most solemn Method of supplicating Favour; and *seldom* met with a Repulse.—To which I may add, It is a Custom that *Christians* should imitate, in all their Addresses to the GOD and FATHER of our *LORD. JESUS CHRIST*. When thus used, thus improved, it will *never* fail of Success.

on Account of what it *presents*, and what it *pleads*.

Ther. Is not this a fanciful Distinction, and an excessive Refinement? Has it any Foundation in Scripture?

Asp. It is implied in almost all the Representations of *CHRIST*, and all the Descriptions of Faith, which occur in the sacred Writings.

CHRIST is likened to *Clothing*; and Believers are said to *have put on CHRIST**. Now, it cannot be the Act of putting on, that covers our Bodies, or keeps them warm; but the commodious Garment, which is wore.—He is compared to *Bread*: *I am the Bread of Life*†. Is it the Act of Eating, that strengthens the Constitution, and recruits our Spirits? No surely; but the Food eaten and digested.—*CHRIST* was typified by the *City of Refuge*‡; and Sinners, by the obnoxious Man-slayer. Who, if He fled to one of those privileged Abodes; and there remained, was safe. No Prosecution against Him could be valid: He had nothing to fear from the Avenger of Blood. In this Case, was it the bare Act of flying, that screened the Criminal? By no means: this conveyed Him to a Place of Security. But the *Place itself* was his Sanctuary, his Asylum, his Safeguard.

Faith

* *Gal.* iii. 27.

† *John* vi. 35.

‡ *Num.* xxxv. 13.

Faith is stiled, *A Receiving of CHRIST* * : *As many as received Him, to them gave He Power, or granted the Privilege, to become the Sons of GOD.* The Office of Faith is, according to this Definition, not to contribute its Quota, much less to deposite the whole Sum, but to take and use the inestimable Gift.—Faith is called, *A Looking unto JESUS* † ; in Allusion, I suppose, to the famous Expedient, provided for the wounded *Israelites* ‡. Our crucified LORD was prefigured, by the brazen Serpent; our Guilt, by the Stings of the fiery Serpents; and our Faith, by looking to the miraculous Remedy. Did the healing Power, I would ask, reside in the mere Act of viewing? No: but in the Emblem of a dying SAVIOUR, elevated on the Pole, and ordained for the Recovery of the People. *Here* all the Efficacy was lodged. *From hence* it was all derived. The Action of the Eye, like the Office

* *John i. 12.* See also *Rom. v. 17.* Where a Critic of accurate Judgment, and delicate Taste (though little known in England) makes this Remark on the Word *λαμβάνετε*, *Non justificat Actus sciendi, quatenus est Actus; sed illud quod sumitur aut apprehenditur.* Bengelius in loc.—His Annotations on the New Testament are comprised in a small *Quarto* Volume. They present the Reader with many refined Observations, on the Elegancies of the Style, and Sublimity of the Doctrines. They are a Pattern of the concise Manner; and, which is perhaps the crowning Excellency, they all along indicate a Heart warm and glowing with the Love of its Subject.

† *Heb. xii. 2.*

‡ *Num. xxi. 8.*

DIALOGUE X. 83

Office of Faith, was only to fetch home, and apply the sanative Virtue.

Once more ; Faith is represented, as *laying bold* on GOD our SAVIOUR * ; *leaning* upon our BELOVED † ; *cleaving* to the LORD ‡ —Please to take notice of yonder Vine. Its Shoots are weak, and its Branches flimsy. Being absolutely unable to support themselves, they are furnished with a very remarkable Set of *Glassers*. Which, like so many Fingers, lay hold on the Pegs of the Wall, or fasten themselves to the Poles within their Reach. Without such a Provision, the Boughs must lie prostrate on the Ground, and be exposed to the Insults of every Foot. Whereas, by this kind Contrivance of Nature, so *creeping* a Plant, will climb into the Air, and enjoy the Breeze ; so *feeble* a Plant, will stand out the Winter, and defy the Storms.—An instructive Admonition to Sinners ! And no contemptible Illustration of Faith, especially in its principal and most distinguishing Employ ! Thus let Us apprehend the blessed *JESUS* ; hold Us fast by our adored REDEEMER ; cleave to his ineffable Worthiness, as those twining Tendrils, by repeated Circumvolutions, adhere to their substantial Supporters. Then shall We rise, by Merits *not our own*,
from

* *Isai.* xxvii. 5. † *Cant.* viii. 5. ‡ *Acts* xi. 23.

from the most abject and miserable Condition, to a State of everlasting Honour and Joy.

Tber. Some People, I believe, would hardly forbear smiling at the Peculiarity of your Diction; and might be inclined to call your Discourse *Canting*, rather than *Reasoning*. For my own Part, I must acknowledge, that, as all your peculiar Phrases are derived from the Scriptures, I hear them with Reverence, rather than any Disposition to sneer. Was my Friend delivering a *Latin* Oration, it would be a sufficient Warrant for any of his Expressions, to prove that they came from the *Ciceronian* Mint. And will it not be, at least, an equally sufficient Authority, for any Modes of Speech used in a *theological* Essay, to alledge that they bear the Stamp of the *Bible*.

Though I make no Objection to your Language, I have yet another Scruple with regard to your Doctrine.—Do the *antient Fathers* adopt or inculcate this imputed Righteousness? If it was so important an Article of our Faith, surely it could not be *unknown* in those early Ages, which were so near the apostolical Fountain. It would not have been omitted by those zealous Preachers, who chose to endure all the Rigours of Persecution, rather than renounce their holy Profession.

Asp. I think, it were sufficient to answer this Question, by asking another—Do the Apostles,

Apostles, does the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD speaking in Scripture, inculcate this Doctrine, or display this Privilege? If so, We need not be very solicitous for any farther Authority. *To the Law, and to the Testimony* *, is our grand, our final Appeal. Amidst all the Darkness and Uncertainty, which evidently run through the Writings of the best of Men, this is our unspeakable Happiness, That *We have a more sure Word of Prophecy; to which We do well to take heed* †.

However; to be a little more particular—It cannot be expected, that We should find many Passages in those pious Authors, very strong and very explicit, upon the Point. Because, in their Days, it was not so professedly opposed; and therefore could not be so exactly discussed, as in later Ages. Nevertheless, they have left enough behind them, to avouch the Substance of what We assert; *That a Man is not justified by any Works, Duties, or Righteousness of his own, but only by Faith in JESUS CHRIST*.—I cannot say, that I have charged my Memory with their very Words; and for that Reason, must not attempt at present to make any Citation. But, when a proper Opportunity offers, and their Works are before me, I may possibly produce a few of their Testimonies.

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In

* *Isai.* viii. 20.† *2 Pet.* i. 19.

In the mean Time, I can mention a Set of Writers, whose Attestation will, I imagine, carry as much Weight with my Friend, as the united Voice of the *Greek* and *Latin* Fathers.

Ther. Who are they?

Asp. Our venerable *Reformers*. The Homilies composed by those excellent Divines, are as expresse to my Purpose, as they are unexceptionable in their Evidence. This is their Language—"The true Understanding of this Doctrine, *We be justified freely by Faith without Works*, is not, that this our *Act* to believe, or this our Faith in *CHRIST*, doth justify Us: for that were to count Ourselves to be justified by some Act or Virtue, that is *within Ourselves*. But the true Meaning thereof, is, That although We hear GOD's Word, and believe it; although We have Hope and Faith, Charity and Repentance, and do never so many good Works: Yet We must renounce the Merit of all our Virtues and good Deeds, as Things that be far too weak and insufficient, to deserve Remission of Sin, and our Justification. We must trust only in GOD's Mercy, and that Sacrifice which our High Priest and Saviour *JESUS CHRIST*, the SON of GOD, offered for Us upon the Cross."

The Homily subjoins a very apposite Illustration; which may conclude our Discourse with

with perfect Propriety, and I hope with equal Efficacy.—“ So that as St. *John Baptist*, although He were never so virtuous and godly a Man, yet in the Matter of forgiving Sin, He did put the People from Him, and appoint them unto *CHRIST*; saying thus unto them, Behold! Yonder is the *LAMB of GOD, which taketh away the Sins of the World*: Even so, as great and as godly a Virtue as the lively Faith is, yet it putteth Us from itself, and remitteth Us unto *CHRIST*, for to have only by Him Remission of Sins or Justification. So that our Faith in *CHRIST*, as it were, saith unto Us thus, It is not I that take away your Sins, but it is *CHRIST* only; and to Him only I send You for that Purpose, forsaking therein all your good Words, Thoughts, and Works, and only putting your Trust in *CHRIST*.”

Ther. If there be any tolerable Sense of the Notion under Debate, I think, it must be understood as follows.—*CHRIST*’s Performance of the Law of his Mediation, or, in other Words, his unfinning Obedience to the moral Law, and the spotless Sacrifice of Himself to the vindictive Justice of *GOD*; these are the only valuable Consideration, on Account of which, the gracious *GOD* restores guilty Crea-

tures to a State of Acceptance with his divine MAJESTY.

Asp. I am far from denying your Proposition. I rejoice in the Propriety of my *Theron's* Sentiments. May his Faith, which is thus far advanced, be carried on by Grace, till it is completed in Glory!—That unfinishing Obedience, and that spotless Sacrifice, are indeed the only valuable, they are also the *truly*, or rather the *infinitely* valuable Consideration; which has fully merited for Us the Remission of Sins, and the Enjoyment of Life; and this not only from the gracious, but even from the *just*, the faithful, the righteous GOD.

But then, they must be *imputed*, in order to furnish Us with a Claim, and invest Us with a Right, to the purchased Privileges.—Suppose them not imputed; and what becomes of our *Interest* in them? They are like a Medicine prepared, but not applied.—Suppose them imputed; and they lay a firm, an apparent, a rational *Foundation*, for every pleasing Hope, and for every heavenly Blessing.

Ther. I fear, I have acknowledged too much.—My Thoughts fluctuate. My Mind is unsettled.—I would not withstand the Truth. I would not disbelieve any Doctrine of the Gospel. Yet—what shall I say? While I *listen*
to

DIALOGUE X. 89

to your Reasoning, I am half a Convert. When I *recollect* the Objections, I revert to my first Opinion.

Of this, however, I am convinced, That human Righteousness is *insufficient* for our Justification. Here your Arguments have carried their Point. I shall henceforth place my Hopes of everlasting Happiness, not upon any Works of my own, but upon the free Goodness, and unbounded Beneficence, of the SUPREME BEING. Pursuant to that Maxim of Scripture, *The Gift of GOD is eternal Life.*

Ass. You do right, *Tberon*, to expect eternal Life as the Gift of GOD, not as the Wages of your own obediential Service. But be pleased to remember, that all the Gifts of Grace, though perfectly *free* to Sinners, are founded upon a grand and inestimable *Price*, paid by their SAVIOUR.—Are they intirely absolved from Guilt? It is because *CHRIST* gave his Life for their Ransom.—Are they heard with Acceptance when they pray? It is because their exalted High Priest intercedes in their Behalf.—Are they completely justified, and instated in endless Bliss? It is because their REDEEMER's consummate Obedience, is the glorious Equivalent for this and every other Blessing.—Therefore, when You mention eternal Life as the Gift of GOD, You should not forget

forget to add with the Holy Apostle, *through*
JESUS CHRIST our LORD *.

———— Well, my *Theron*; what say
 You farther? Is your Quiver emptied? Are
 your Scruples satisfied? May I interpret this
 Silence, as an Act of Assent?

Ther. Observe, how the *Ranunculuses*, on
 yonder gay Parterre, have contracted their
 spreading Tufts, and the *Tulips* have closed
 their expanded Cups. While all the neigh-
 bouring Flowers, have shut their ivory Doors,
 or drawn their Velvet Curtains.—Such is the
 State of my Thoughts. They are all bent in-
 wards; *collected* in themselves; and *pondering*
 upon your Discourse. Which has inclined
 me, before I was aware, to contemplate, ra-
 ther than talk.—You will excuse my Thought-
 fulness, *Aspasio*. Or, if it wants an Apology,
 You must blame Yourself. For, had your
 Reasons been less cogent, my Attention had
 been more disengaged.

Asp. My dear *Theron*, I shall only wish, in
 Allusion to your own Simile, and in the Lan-
 guage of the best of Books; That these Truths
 may *distil as the Dew* † upon your Mind, and
lie all Night upon your Branches ‡. This, I am
 persuaded, is the only Way to have all your
 Comforts *green before the Sun*, and all your
 Virtues *flourish as an Herb*. Whereas, under
 the

* *Ram.* vi. 20. † *Deut.* xxxii. 2. ‡ *Job* xxix. 19.

the Influence of any other Faith, I am afraid, they will be as the Garden, that is visited with a Drought; or as the Leaves, that are smitten with a Blast.

Yber. I shall attentively consider, both your Doctrine, and your Arguments. Which that I may execute, with more Ease, and to better Purpose, be pleased to *sum up*, in a few Words, the Substance of what has passed.—This done, it will be Time to withdraw. The Flowers, You see, are our Monitors. They have folded up their Robes, and veiled their Beauties. A Custom which they seldom use, till the *rising Damps* render it unsafe, for their Master to be among them; and the *surrounding Gloom* renders it difficult, for His Eye to distinguish them.

Assp. You could not oblige me more, than by giving me such a Command.—We trust for Salvation,

Not on our own *external Duties*. This were to build our House upon the Sand. Which, when the Rains descend, when the Torrents pour, when the Winds blow with tempestuous Violence, will certainly fall; and bury the Builder, with all his vain Hopes, in irretrievable Ruin.

Not on the *Sincerity* of our *Hearts*. This, if opposed to *CHRIST*, and made the Rival of his Merits, will be a “despised broken
“Idol.”

"Idol." *Despised*, by the infinitely sublime and majestic RULER of the World. *Broken*, with regard to the Strefs We lay, or the Confidence We repose, on so deceitful a Prop. No more able to stand in the Judgment of the great Day, than *Dagon* was able to maintain his Station, before the Ark of the LORD GOD of Hosts*.

Not upon our *Faith*. This is often weak, as the rickety Child: sometimes quite faint, like a Person in a deep Swoon: always imperfect, like every other Performance of ours. Alas! To what afflicting Fears, to what grievous Despondency should I, for my Part, be perpetually liable, if my own Faith was the Ground of my Justification. Blessed be the FATHER of Mercies! We have a surer Support. Not upon Faith, not upon Faith, but upon its gracious AUTHOR, and glorious OBJECT, is the Hope of *Israel* founded. Yet

Not upon our LORD's Righteousness, considered only as passive; but upon his *active* and *passive* Obedience united. All that He *did*, in Conformity to the Commands of the Law; and all that He *suffered*, in Submission to its Penalty. Both which, immensely dignified by his divine Nature, are a Basis for our Faith, which nothing can shake; are a Founda-

* 1 Sam. v. 3, 4.

Foundation for our Affiance, which can never be removed.—Nothing else, in any Creature, or in all Worlds, could expiate the *least Sin*. This, not only expiates all Sin, but gives a Title to *every Blessing*—to the Blessings of Grace, and of Glory—of evangelical Holiness, and everlasting Happiness.





DIALOGUE XI.

ASPASIO.

 HAVE often purposed, and as often forgot, to ask—What *Picture* You was so attentively surveying, when I stole unperceived upon You, in this favourite Arbour *.

Ther. I was indulging a pensive Pleasure, in viewing the Ruins, and contemplating the Fate of *Babylon*—that renowned and opulent City! Once the Residence of the *Assyrian* Monarchs, and Capital of one of the greatest Empires in the World. The Draught I held in my Hand, represented some of its Remains. And indeed this was the very last Subject, that employed my Thoughts. In the Morning, my Son brought me his Observations upon the Scene; which I have just now been revising.

For,

* See Dialogue V. p. 196.

For, I frequently set Him, to exercise his Judgment, or display his Fancy, on remarkable Passages, which occur in History.—He was lately commissioned to determine a Controversy, between the illustrious *Leonidas*, and the less celebrated *Pædaretus*. This was the Point in Debate : Which of them discovered the *truest* Generosity of Spirit, and the *most heroic* Love of their Country ? The former, who willingly sacrificed his Life in its Defence ? Or the latter, who, when He was Candidate for a Seat among the Three Hundred, and lost his Election ; instead of being chagrined or dissatisfied, went home unfeignedly rejoicing, “ That there were found in “ *Sparta* three hundred Men, more worthy “ than Himself ? ”—The Task of this Day was, To give a *descriptive Picture* of those wonderful Ruins.

Asp. Pray, let me have the Pleasure of hearing the young Gentleman's Performance.

Theb. It will be too long, and too puerile : tire your Patience, and offend your Taste.

Asp. I don't use to make either of these Complaints, when I am entertained with *The-ron's* Compositions. And, as the Son has so much of his Father's Genius, I am not at all apprehensive of any such Disappointment.—We have a most agreeable Situation, and
more

more than an Hour's Leisure. I must therefore repeat my Request.

Yber. 'Tis true, I have retouched the Sketch; which may render it somewhat more tolerable. And since You persist in your Demand, I will read the Paper.—Only desiring some Allowance for a little *Luxuriancy* of Imagination. Which, in young Writers it may be adviseable to indulge, rather than repress. As Age and Judgment will, probably, come with the pruning Knife, and make the proper Retrenchments.—I must farther observe, that, contrary to the Custom which prevails in our Schools, I generally choose to have Him express his Sentiments in *English*. Because, it is in this Language, He must communicate *his own*, and become acquainted with the Ideas of *Others*. Because, to acquire some good Degree of Propriety and Fluency in this his native Tongue, will be incomparably more serviceable, than to speak *Latin* with the *Terentian* Elegance, or to write it with the *Ciceronian* Copiousness.

Is this *Babylon*? The Glory of Kingdoms!
The Beauty of the *Chaldean* Excellency!

Where once the gorgeous East, with richest Hand,
Shower'd on her Kings barbaric Pearl and Gold.

How

How is She fallen ! Fallen from the Height of Magnificence, into the Abyss of Confusion ! What was once the Object of universal Admiration, is now a Spectacle of Astonishment and Horror.

The *Palace*, where Majesty sat enthroned like some terrestrial Deity, is a Heap of Rubbish : no longer distinguished by an Air of superior Elegance, but by stronger and more melancholy Marks of departed Dignity *.—Where, the Nobles of that *sumptuous Court*, trailed along the marble Pavements their Robes of Purple and Embroidery ; there, the crested Snake hisses, or the fierce invenomed Adder glides.

How changed is the hospitable *Hall*, and how disgraced the *Room of State* ! The first afforded a constant and cordial Reception to the welcome Guests ; in the last, the great King gave Audience to his cringing, his adoring Vassals. Now, Thorns over-run the Circumference, and “ Desolation sits in the Threshold ” of them both.—Where are the Roofs of Ivory,
painted

* *Benjamin*, a Jew of *Tudela*, in his *Itinerary*, written about the Year of our LORD 1170, tells Us—“ That He “ was upon the Place, where this City formerly stood, and “ found it wholly desolated and destroyed. Only some Ruins “ of *Nebuchadnezzar’s* Palace were still remaining ; but Men “ were afraid to go near them, by reason of the many Serpents and Scorpions, that were then in the Place.”

painted with *Vermilion*, and adorned with *Sculpture*? The radiant Roofs, whose Lamps of burnished Silver, pendent in many a blazing Row, yielded Light as from another Sky? Swept from their Foundations, they lie clotted with defiling Dirt, or clasped in tangling Briars.—*Musick* no longer pours her Harmony, through the spacious and extended Apartment; but the Night-Owl, nestling in some Cleft of the Ruins, screams her harsh and portentous Dissonance. *Joy* no longer leads up the sprightly Dance, amidst the Lustre of that artificial Day; but the solitary Batt flits in silent Circles, or flaps her sooty Wings. All those gay Delights—let the *Sons of Sensuality* hear the Tale, and take Warning from the Catastrophe!—all those gay Delights are extinguished, like one of their feeblest Tapers; which, having illuminated for a while the festive Assembly, shone itself to the Edges of the exhausted Socket, and in a Moment flashed into Stench and Darknefs.

The *Walls*, though cemented with Bitumen *, and consolidated into the Firmness of a Flint,

* The Walls were built of Brick, and cemented with a glutinous Kind of Slime; which binds more firmly than any Mortar, and soon grows harder, than the Brick or Stones themselves.—They were, according to the Account given by *Herodotus*, in *Breadth* eighty-seven Feet, in *Height* three hundred and fifty Feet, and reckoned to be absolutely impregnable. Infomuch that the Inhabitants, when besieged by *Cyrus*, insulted

a Flint, are become like the broken Bubble. There was a Time, when the Inhabitants, confiding in the Strength of their Bulwarks, and their impregnable Towers, looked down with fearless Disdain on the Army of Besiegers. But now the Prophet's Threatening is most terribly fulfilled: *The Fortrefs of the high Fort of thy Walls hath HE brought down, laid low, and brought to the Ground, even to the Dust* *.—Where are the *Gates*, the grand and glittering Gates †, that admitted the triumphant Hosts, or poured forth their numerous Legions against the Day of Battle? Not one Trace remains, to tell the inquisitive Stranger; “Here the spacious Avenues opened: Here the massy Portals rose.”—Commodious *Walks*, in which the clustering Merchants raised the busy Hum, and planned the Schemes of Commerce; ample *Streets*, in which Industry drove the toiling Car, or smote the sounding Anvil; are shrouded with matted Grass, or buried beneath the rankest Weeds. Silence, in both Places, a full-

len
sulted Him from the Walls, and laughed at his Attempt, as a vain impracticable Project.—ΟΙ ΔΕ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΤΕΙΧΕΙ ΚΑΤΕΓΕΛΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΠΟΛΙΟΡΧΙΑΝ. Xenoph. *Inst. Cyr.* Lib. vii.

* *Isai.* xxv. 12.

† There were no less than a hundred Gates, all of solid Brass. Hence it is, that when JEHOVAH promises to make Cyrus Master of *Babylon*, He speaks in this very remarkable and particularizing Manner; *I will break in Pieces before Thee the Gates of Brass*, *Isai.* xiv. 2.

len Silence reigns ; and Inactivity, a death-like Inactivity, slumbers.

What is become of those *Hanging-gardens*, which, for curious Contrivance and stupendous Workmanship, were never equalled in any Nation under Heaven ? *Terraces*, that overlooked the tallest Houses ! *Parterres*, exalted to the Clouds, and opening their flowery Beauties in that strange Region ! *Groves*, whose very Roots were higher than the Tops of the loftiest Trees * !—They are now smitten by a dreadful Blast. Their Beauty is gone like a withered Leaf. Instead of being the favourite Retreats of a Queen, and the Admiration of the whole World, they are a Nest for poisonous Reptiles, and a Kennel for ravenous Beasts. The Traveler, instead of expatiating with Delight, where this *penfile Paradise* flourished, is struck with Horror ; keeps at a trembling Distance ; and surveying the rueful Spot, cries out, *Righteous art Thou, O LORD, and true are thy Judgments !*

Here stands an *Obelisk*, maimed by the Stroke of revolving Years, like a Mountain Oak shattered by the flaming Bolt. Another, all unhinged and quite disjointed, seems to tremble before every Blast that blows.—There,

the

* *Penfiles Horti sunt, summam Murorum Altitudinem æquantes, multarumque Arborum Umbra & Proceritate amœni.*

Curt. Lib. V.

the *Pyramid**; firm as the solid Rock, and stable, One would have thought, as the everlasting Hills; wrenched from its mighty Base, is tumbled headlong in enormous Ruin, and has crushed many a Structure by its Fall.— See yonder, the *triumphal Arch*; which exhibited, through its extensive and beautiful Bend, an advantageous View of the Firmament. It was, once, the graceful Memorial of some celebrated Victory; it is, now, converted into a Trophy of a very different Kind. Just retaining two uneven, battered, ragged Stumps, it serves to recognize the destructive Ravages of Time.—*Spires*, that pierced the Clouds, and shot into the Skies, are leveled with the trodden Soil. On *Pinacles*, to which the strong-winged Bird could hardly soar, the groveling Worm crawls, and the sordid Snail leaves her slimy Track.—*Baths*, that contained the translucent Wave, and were so often perfumed with odoriferous Unguents, are choked with Filth; the grand *Colonnade*, that surrounded them, is shivered to pieces; and the elevated *Dome*, that covered them, is dashed to the Ground.

* *Strabo* calls the Temple of *Belus* a *Pyramid*. Lib. XV. But if the Critics in History should question or deny the Existence of Pyramids among the *Babylonians*, for this and other Liberties used by our young Declaimer, *Horace* shall make an Apology:

*Pisioribus atque Poetis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua Potestas.*

Ground.—The public *Aqueducts*, that conveyed Cleanliness and Health along their crystal Currents, are degenerated into a stagnating Lake; while croaking Vermine swarm among the Weeds, and noisome Exhalations steam from the Mire.

August and stately *Temples*, that seemed to affect the Neighbourhood of Heaven*, are sunk to the very Dust.—Who can point the Spot, where the consecrated Victim bled, or the sacred Fire glowed? Where the sceptred Image lifted its majestic Head, or the venerating Crouds bowed the suppliant Knee †? Degraded are those splendid Vanities, and cast (according to the Denunciation of the sacred Oracles) *to the Bats and to the Moles* ‡. All is low; low as the spurious Dignity of the Idols they

* A Tower in the Temple of *Belus*, and dedicated to his Worship, was most amazingly high. It consisted of eight Towers, erected one above another. It arose to the Elevation of six hundred Feet perpendicular. And is thought, by the learned *Bechart*, to have been Part of that superb Work, which was begun when *the whole Earth was of one Language*: but miscarried, or rather was providentially defeated, by the Confusion of Tongues. In this Structure, there were doubtless very strong Traces of that arrogant Boast; *Let Us build Us a City and a Tower, whose Top may reach to Heaven.* Gen. xi. 4.

† Alluding to that prodigious Instance of Profuseness, Ostentation, and idolatrous Madness, *the golden Image set up in the Plain of Dura: whose Height* (that is, the Height of the Statue and Pedestal taken together) *was threescore Cubits.* Dan. iii. 1. See *Prideaux's Connection.* Vol. I. p. 95, &c. p. 567, &c.

‡ *Isai.* ii. 20.

they complimented; low as the Straw, that is trodden down for the Dungbil*.

Sepulchres, the once venerable Repositories of the Dead, awful Mansions, destined to everlasting Concealment; are cleft and rent asunder. They disclose the horrid Secrets of the Pit, and frightfully yawn upon the blasted Day. Possibly, some ravenous Creature lurks within, that has already rifled the Tomb of its Hero; given the putrid Bones a new Grave; and waits only for the Approach of Night, to repeat his funeral Dirge in Yells.—*Inscriptions*, designed to perpetuate some illustrious Character, or eternize some heroic Deed, are blended in the promiscuous Mass. In vain, would the prying Antiquary search for a legible or consistent Sentence: in vain, attempt to find the memorable Names of a *Nebuchadnezzar* or a *Nimrod*. These, though engraved on Plates of Brass, or cut in Blocks of Marble, are lost amidst the stupendous Lumber; as Prints on the unsteady Sand are effaced, when returning Tides smooth the furrowed Beach.

Here and there a straggling Cypress rises, as it were with funeral Solemnity, amidst the Waste †. Somewhat like the black Plumes, nodding

* *Isai.* xxv. 10.

† *Rauwolf*, a German Traveler, who passed that Way, in the Year of our LORD 1574, says; "This Country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled; and so bare, G 4 " that

nodding over the mournful Hearse, they augment the Sadness of the Scene, and throw a deeper Horror on all below.—No human Voice is heard, nor human Face seen, amidst these desolated Heaps. Too dreary, even for the Roam of hoary Hermit, or the Cell of gloomy Monk. Abandoned they are, totally abandoned, to the Dominion of Solitude; or else, to the unmolested Resort of shaggy Monsters, and feathered Hags; that stun the midnight Hours—*these*, with their importunate Shrieks—*those*, with their execrable Howls.

See! to what a despicable, what an abhorred State, the proudest Monuments of earthly Grandeur, and the most costly Apparatus for earthly Felicity, may be reduced! A pregnant and alarming Proof, that, for *lasting Honour*, or *real Happiness*,

They build too low, who build beneath the Skies.

Asp. I very much approve the Choice of your Subject. The Ruins of *Persepolis*, would have given Us a View of Magnificence in Abasement. The Ruins of *Palmyra*, might have shewed Us Elegance in the Dust. But the Ruins of *Babylon* display at once, Magnificence and Elegance under an Eclipse, *Scripture*

“that I should have doubted, whether the potent *Babylon*
 “did stand there, if I had not known it by several antient
 “and delicate Antiquities, that are still standing heréabout
 “in great Desolation.”

ture and Revelation in their Glory.—The utter Destruction of this City, which was absolutely unequalled * in every Instance of Dignity, and seemingly invincible by any Enemy, must certainly have been looked upon as the *most improbable* of Events. Nevertheless its utter Destruction was decreed by JEHOVAH, and denounced by his Prophet, several Ages before the Execution took place. The awful *Sentence* was not only recorded, but is still remaining, in the public Archives of our Religion.

Ther. Where is this Sentence recorded?

Asp. In the Prophecy of *Isaiab.* And not only recorded, but in the most circumstantial Manner, and with a minute Detail of the horrible Desolations. These are the Words of the inspired Writer; BABYLON, *the Glory of Kingdoms, the Beauty of the Chaldees Excellency, shall be as when GOD overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited; neither shall it be dwelt in from Generation to Generation: Neither shall the Arabian pitch Tent there; neither shall the Shepherds make their Fold there. But wild Beasts of the Desert shall lie there, and their Houses shall be full of doleful Creatures, and Owls shall dwell there, and Satyrs shall dance there. And the wild Beasts of the*
Islands

* *Unequalled*—Represented therefore by the golden Head, in *Nebuchadnezzar's* prophetic Dream, and emblematic Image. *Dan. ii. 38.*—And described by an ancient Author, as *Omnium quas unquam Sol aspexit Urbium maxima.* Pausan. in *Arcad.*

*Islands shall cry in their desolate Houses, and Dragons in their pleasant Palaces *.*

In the two first Sentences, is comprized the most finished Picture of Prosperity and Grandeur. *The Glory of Kingdoms*; beyond every other Metropolis, spacious, ornamented, and wealthy; revered by many conquered and tributary Dominions, as their Mistress, and their Sovereign.—*The Beauty of the Chaldees Excellency*: The Chaldeans, who excelled all the Nations of the Earth in Riches, in Splendor, and in Power, *even they* gloried in this wonderful City. This was the highest Honour of the most illustrious, and chief Strength of the most victorious People; fairest, where all was conspicuously fair; noblest, where all was supereminently noble.—Yet this distinguished, this crowning City, *shall*, at the blasting of the Breath of JEHOVAH, be destroyed as utterly, *as when GOD overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*

In describing the Overthrow of this great City, the Prophet is equally admirable; and rises, by a most judicious Gradation, into all the Pomp of Horror. *q. d.* “Now, indeed, “it is thronged with Citizens; but, the Hour “is coming, when it shall be intirely depopulated, and not so much as a single Inhabitant left.—Left You should think, that “in

* *Isai. xiii. 19, 20, 21, 22.*

“ in Proceſs of Time it may be re-edified,
 “ and again abound with joyful Multitudes,
 “ *it ſhall never be inhabited more; no, never*
 “ *be dwelt in* any more, *from Generation to*
 “ *Generation*; but ſhall continue a diſmal
 “ Waſte, through all ſucceeding Ages.—So
 “ far from being rebuilt, that it ſhall be in-
 “ tirely uſeleſs. Not ſo much as the rude
 “ and roving *Arabian* ſhall *pitch his Tent*, or
 “ procure for Himſelf the poor Accommo-
 “ dation of a Night’s Lodging; where Millions
 “ of polite People basked in the Sunſhine of
 “ profuſe Proſperity. Neither ſhall the *Shep-*
 “ *berds make their Fold*, or find ſo much as an
 “ occaſional Shelter for their Flocks; where
 “ Kings, Grantees, and Crouds of affluent
 “ Citizens, repoſed themſelves in profound
 “ Tranquillity.—Yea, ſo far from being ha-
 “ bitable, that it ſhall be *inacceſſible*: the
 “ Haunt of every doleful, horrid, and de-
 “ ſtructive Monster: and ſerve no manner
 “ of valuable Purpoſe, unleſs it be to ſtand
 “ as a Monument of divine Vengeance, and
 “ an Admonition to human Pride.”

All this is foretold in Scripture; and, though
 to human Appearance impoſſible, though to
 human Apprehenſion incredible, was, in the
 appointed Time, moſt minutely accompliſhed.
 The Memorials and Evidences of the Accom-
 pliſhment

plishment remain to this very Day *. They are so *authentic*, that the most inquisitive Curiosity cannot doubt; and so *incontestable*, that the most bigotted Incredulity will not deny. And should not this teach Us, to reverence the Authority, to admire the Wisdom, and confide in the Promises of that heavenly Volume?

I know, You are not fond of Compliments, *Theron*. Therefore, instead of speaking my Opinion of your Son's Performance, I will endeavour to return your Favour.—You have entertained me with an Account of the most memorable Ruins, extant in the material World. Let me present my Friend with a Picture of Ruins, no less *remarkable*, far more *deplor-*

* It is said, by a very learned Author; *Babylonem usque eo concidisse, ut Nemo cum Fiducia illius Locum amplius demonstrare queat.* i. e. "Babylon is now so totally destroyed, that the most skilful Geographers cannot, with Certainty, determine the Place, on which it stood."

Should any of my Readers prefer this Account, I shall neither litigate the Point, nor be anxious for the Consequence. It may indeed rank *Eugenio's* Composition among the Works of Fancy. But it will realize *Aspasio's* Assertion, and corroborate his Argument. If We find no *Memorials* of the City, We have the *most evident* Verification, and the *fullest* Accomplishment, of the Prophecy.

If this be the Case, it gives an amazing Emphasis to that just, but terrible Decree, issued from the supreme Tribunal; *I will sweep it with the Besom of Destruction, saith the LORD of Hosts.* "I will not only lay it in Ruins, but extirpate it from the Earth. I will efface the very Footsteps of its Existence; and not leave so much as a *Fragment* or a *Trace* of that magnificent, but wicked Metropolis." *Isai.* xiv. 23.

deplorable, and unspeakably *interesting* to Us all. I shall give it, in the Colouring of a great Master; whose Works, this very Day, I happened to be perusing.

The Passage displays a Doctrine, of the utmost Importance in the Christian Scheme; and by one of the finest Pieces of Imagery, to be met with in elegant Writing. I think, it may be looked upon, as a *practical Improvement* of *Eugenio's* Declamation. It pleased me so much, that I transcribed it; and I make no Apology for reading it, because I shall expect your Thanks.—Only let me hint, that it considers the human Soul, as originally an Habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT; and then, speaking of its fallen Condition, proceeds.

“ That He *hath withdrawn Himself*, and
 “ left *this his Temple* desolate, We have many
 “ sad and plain Proofs before Us. The *stately*
 “ Ruins are visible to every Eye, that bear in
 “ their Front (yet extant) this doleful Inscription; HERE GOD ONCE DWELT. Enough
 “ appears of the admirable Frame and Structure of the *Soul of Man*, to shew the divine
 “ Presence did sometime reside in it; more
 “ than enough of vicious *Deformity*, to proclaim He is now *retired* and *gone*. The
 “ Lamps are extinct, the *Altar* overturned;
 “ the *Light* and *Love* are now vanished, which
 “ did

" did the one *shine*, with so heavenly Bright-
 " nefs; the other *burn*, with so pious Fervour.
 " The *golden Candlestick* is displaced, and thrown
 " away as an useless Thing, to make room
 " for the Throne of the *Prince of Darkness*.
 " The *sacred Incense*, which sent rolling up in
 " Clouds its rich Perfumes, is exchanged for
 " a poisonous hellish Vapour; and here is,
 " *instead of a sweet Savour, a Stench*. The
 " comely Order of this House is turned all
 " into Confusion. The *Beauties of Holiness*
 " into *noisome Impurities*. The *House of Prayer*
 " to a *Den of Thieves*, and that of the worst
 " and most horrid Kind; for every *Lust* is a
 " *Thief*, and every *Theft* is *Sacrilege*: Con-
 " tinual Rapine and Robbery is committed
 " upon *holy Things*. The noble Powers, which
 " were designed and dedicated to *divine Con-*
 " *templation and Delight*, are alienated to the
 " Service of the most despicable Idols, and
 " employed unto the vilest Intuitions and
 " Embraces; to behold and admire *lying Va-*
 " *nities*, to indulge and cherish Lust and
 " Wickedness.

" There is not now a System, an intire Ta-
 " ble of *coherent Truths* to be found, or a
 " *Frame of Holiness*, but some shivered Parcels.
 " How many Attempts have been made, since
 " that fearful Fall and Ruin of this Fabric,
 " to compose again the Truths of so many
 " several

DIALOGUE XI. 111

“ several Kinds into their distinct Orders, and
 “ make up Frames of Science or useful Know-
 “ ledge ! and after so many Ages, nothing is
 “ finished in any Kind. Sometimes, Truths
 “ are misplaced, and what belongs to *one Kind*,
 “ is transferred to *another*, where it will not
 “ fitly match ; sometimes, *Falshood inserted*,
 “ which shatters or disturbs the whole Frame.
 “ And what with much fruitless Pains, is
 “ done by one Hand, is dashed in pieces by
 “ another ; and it is the Work of a *following*
 “ Age to sweep away the fine-spun Cobwebs
 “ of a *former*. And those Truths, which are
 “ of greatest Use, are least regarded ; their
 “ Tendency and Design are overlooked, or
 “ they are so loosened and torn off, that they
 “ cannot be wrought in, so as to take hold
 “ of the Soul ; but hover as *faint ineffectual*
 “ *Notions*, that signify Nothing. Its very fun-
 “ damental Powers are shaken and disjointed,
 “ and their Order towards one another con-
 “ founded and broken. So that what is judged
 “ *considerable*, is not *considered* ; what is re-
 “ commended as *eligible* and *lovely*, is not loved
 “ and chosen. Yea, the Truth which is after
 “ Godliness, is not so much *disbelieved*, as
 “ *bated, beld in Unrighteousness* : and shines as
 “ too feeble a *Light*, in that malignant Dark-
 “ ness, which *comprehends it not*. You come,
 “ amidst all this Confusion, as into the ruined
 “ Palace

" Palace of some great Prince, in which You
 " see here the Fragments of a noble Pillar,
 " there the shattered Pieces of some curious
 " Imagery; and all lying neglected and useless
 " amongst Heaps of Dirt. He that invites
 " You to take a View of the Soul of Man,
 " gives You but such another Prospect, and
 " doth but say to You, *Behold the Desolation*,
 " all Things rude and waste. So that should
 " there be any Pretence to the divine Presence,
 " it might be said, *If GOD be here, why is it*
 " *thus?* The faded Glory, the Darkness, the
 " Disorder, the Impurity, the decayed State
 " in all respects of this Temple, too plainly
 " shew, *The GREAT INHABITANT* is
 " gone *."

Ther. Your Painter, I must own, is a Ma-
 ster in his Profession; and seems to have a
 peculiar Talent for a *Night-piece*.—But why,
 I beseech You, so much of his Shades and
 Solemnity? Has He no Colours, but the dark?
 No Lineaments, but the sour? Could He not
 allow Us one bright Tint, one smiling Fea-
 ture? when He was copying the noblest Being
 in this sublunary World?—Is it for the Ho-
 nour of the great CREATOR, to give such a
 deformed Draught of his most finished Work-
 manship?

Asp.

* See Mr. Howe's Treatise, intitled *The living Temple*.

Ass. It reflects no kind of Dishonour upon the Architect of *Babylon*, that its Palaces are fallen, its Edifices demolished, and its Walls leveled with the Ground. They might have been built with the exactest Symmetry, and once embellished with every graceful Ornament; notwithstanding the Stroke of Violence, or the Sap of Years, have now reduced them to Heaps of Rubbish.—The human Soul, when recent from the Inspiration of the ALMIGHTY, was bright with Knowledge, amiable with Virtue, and in every respect excellent. But *How*—to speak in the Language of the mourning Prophet; a Language, never more pertinent than on the present Occasion—*How is the Gold become dim! How is the most fine Gold changed!*

Ther. Man's Soul is rational and eternal; is the Offspring of the DEITY, and capable of resembling its MAKER.

Ass. What *Milton* allows to the fallen Arch-Angel, I can readily allow to fallen Man:

—————*He had not lost
All his original Brightness.*

The grand and distinguishing Faculties of the Soul remain. Just as, when a Fountain is poisoned, the Waters continue to flow: but flow no longer with *Health*, flow rather with *Death* in the Stream. These very Faculties,

unless renewed and regulated by the Influence of Religion, must be our present Misery, and will prove our everlasting Curse.—“The Soul,” You say, “is rational, is eternal.” And do not even the Devils possess the Powers of Reason? Is not their Existence also of an endless Duration? Yet are they of all Creatures, the most execrable and the most miserable.

You call the human Soul, the Offspring of the DEITY. And You call it properly. Must We not then adopt the Prophet’s Exclamation, “*How art Thou fallen, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning*”! How art Thou degenerated, “O Man, Son of the MOST HIGH! Thy glorious Original serves only to set forth, with more glaring Evidence, thy deplorable Apostacy.”

Capable, You add, of resembling its MAKER. This, I acknowledge, is a valuable Prerogative. In this the infernal Spirits have no Share. But this Capacity will always lie dormant; will never awaken into Act; never be established in Habit; unless Almighty GRACE intervene.

Ther. The most celebrated Philosophers of Antiquity, frequently exhort their Readers to *follow Nature*; as a certain Guide to true Excellence.—Many eloquent Writers of our own Country, inlarge upon the *Dignity* of human Nature;

* *Isai.* xiv. 12.

Nature; and from this Topic derive very forcible Arguments, for a correspondent Dignity both of Sentiment and Behaviour.—Upon what can those Principles of the antient Sages, and of our later Moralists, be founded?

Asp. Indeed, *Theron*, I am at a loss to tell, If they have any Foundation, it is merely imaginary; not laid in Truth, nor confirmed by Experience.—According to my Apprehension, they invert the Order of Things. They take that for a *Postulatum*, which ought to be ranked among the *Desiderata*; and make an Axiom of a mere Figment.

Had Man continued, as He was created, to act according to Nature, and according to the Law of GOD, would have been one and the same Thing. For which Reason, We find no Precepts of Religion, no Delineation of Morality, given to *Adam* in Paradise. Because, Religion and Morality were engraven on his Heart; or rather, they resulted from the very Bent and Tendency of his perfect Frame.—But since the Fall it is quite otherwise.

Ther. Have not many of the antient Worthies been *living Confutations* of your Opinion? Wise Philosophers, judicious Lawgivers, and steady Ministers of Justice? Their Desires refined, their Affections benevolent, their whole Conduct upright.

Asp. I cannot forbear wondering, that You should instance in Lawgivers and Ministers of Justice. Since the very Institution of their Office *presupposes* the Depravity of Mankind. Was human Nature agitated by no irregular or vicious Inclinations, the Barrier of Laws would be as needless in civil Societies, as the vast Banks of *Holland* are needless in our upland Counties.

But this, You will say, is a digressive Observation. Your Question requires a positive Answer. And it is easy to answer, That the Painting is beyond the Life. If my Author has been too free with the *dark*, my Friend has been too lavish of the *glittering* Colours.—Those famous Men might aim, perhaps, at the Excellency You describe. Not one of them came up to the Mark.—Or, suppose they did, this would not invalidate my Tenet.

Ther. This not invalidate your Tenet! Then Demonstration carries no Conviction.

Asp. Pray, who is your greatest Favourite, among all the renowned Persons of Antiquity?

Ther. Socrates.—He stands at the Head of the Class; and was, indisputably, the wisest and the best of the Heathen World.

Asp. I think so too.—Be pleased, however, to recollect the Story of the *Physiognomist*; who pretended to discover the Disposition of the
the

DIALOGUE XI. 117

the Mind, by the Cast of the Countenance. The Professor of this occult Science undertook, You know, to exercise his Skill upon *Socrates*; and pronounced Him, after an Examination of his Features, lascivious, passionate, and morose.—This Judgment, so extravagantly wide of the Truth, was bringing a Storm of Ridicule and Resentment upon the poor Fortune-teller. When the ingenuous Philosopher interposed, and owned the Description to be exactly true. That *such* was his natural Temper; and if his Conversation had been of a different Turn, it was owing to the Aids of Philosophy.—So that, even in your most finished * Character, there was no innate Dignity. All was *adventitious*.

Ther. If Corruption was derived unto all Men from their Forefather *Adam*; methinks, all

* Though I love and admire the Character of *Socrates*, yet I cannot approve the whole of his Conduct. One Thing which gives me particular Offence is, the *habitual* Practice of *Swearing*, which occurs in all his Conferences with his Pupils. *Μα τὸν Δία, Νῦν Δι'*, or some such Appeal to the DEITY is used, not only in every Discourse, but almost in every Page; and that upon the most *unnecessary* Occasions.—I have often wondered, that so polite a Writer as *Xenophon*, should admit this flagrant Impropriety into his Dialogues. Which, besides its *irreligious* Air, is somewhat like the *Crambe repetita*; and recurs, and recurs, and recurs, till it is really tiresome. But much more I wonder, that his excellent Master, should suffer the Sanction of an Oath, to become so *trivial*; and the Honour of his *Jupiter*, so *cheap*.
H 3 This

all should be equally corrupt. But this is contrary to known Fact. Some We see naturally loving and lovely; gentle in their Manners; and subject to no inordinate Appetites.

Asp. Some Persons may be of *more composed*, or, if You please, of *less dissolute* Manners, than the Generality of other People. Thanks to a better Temperature of their Constitution, or a more watchful Care in their Education. —But shew me the unregenerate Man, that is subject to *no* inordinate Appetites? One vile Affection may check another, or a Sense of Decency may hold the Curb upon all. But it is one Thing, to have the wild Beast in the Heart chained; another, to have Him expelled, or the Lion transformed into a Lamb.

Ther. Have We not often observed heroic Courage, and a Generosity of Spirit, where the Education has been none of the strictest? To what can we ascribe these laudable Qualities, but to the innate Nobleness of the Temper, working without any auxiliary Succours?

Asp. Virtue, *Theron*, is a *complete* Assemblage, not some *disjointed* Shreds, of laudable Qualities. Those You mention, if not accompanied

This proves the deplorable *Blindness* of human Reason; which could mistake so notorious a Profanation of the divine Name, for a genteel Embellishment of Speech—It shews Us, likewise, our extreme Need of that *revealed* Law, which, among other refined Precepts, unknown to the Religion of Nature, enjoins; *Above all Things, swear not—And Thou shalt not take the Name of the LORD thy GOD in vain.*

companies with the whole Circle of amiable Accomplishments, are no more to be called Virtue; than two or three scattered Fragments of an Edifice, are to be honoured with the Appellation of an House.—How often are those very Persons, with all their Fortitude, Slaves to ignoble Pleasures, or in Bondage to the basest Lusts. A most infallible Indication, that they have no *uniform* Generosity, nor any *real* Courage.—Desire of Fame, may prompt to many such Acts, as *dazzle* the superficial Eye: which yet are far, very far from *genuine* Virtue.

Ther. Do You then attribute the *Grecian* Politeness and the high *Roman* Spirit, all the gallant Actions of their Heroes and Generals, to a Desire of Fame?

Asp. There is Reason to suspect, that they derived their Origin from some improper Motive. And no Motive was more artfully instilled, or more assiduously cherished, than the Spirit of Ambition.—View their Crowns, their Statues, their triumphal Solemnities.—Read their Orators, their Historians, their Poets—The former were the *School*, the latter were the *Masters*, to inculcate this grand Lesson.

Let Us consider the *Romans* a little more attentively; and not amidst the Dregs of their Community, but in their very best Ages;

when their Republic subsisted, and their *Scipios* flourished. Many great and shining Deeds were undoubtedly performed. But did they spring from a *reverential Regard* to the SUPREME BEING; from Obedience to his Will, or Zeal for his Honour?

If this Principle should be thought too refined, did they proceed from a *Love* to their *Fellow-creatures*? In case, neither of these Motives * actuated their Conduct, it can never be placed to the Account of Virtue.—Had Benevolence been their leading Principle, why such *Inhumanity* to *Carthage*? Why must that opulent City be laid in Ashes, and her numerous Citizens be put to the Sword? Were they Enemies to Mankind, or a Nuisance in the World? You well know, that they were only too industrious, and too powerful. By which means, they would be in a Condition, to eclipse the Magnificence of the *Roman* Name, and dispute the Prize of Sovereignty with the *Roman* State. For this Crime—a Crime, in Ambition's Eye, absolutely inexcusable

* A Zeal for the Honour of GOD, and a Concern for the Good of our Fellow-creatures, are the true Sources of Virtue, 1 *Cor.* x. 24, 31. When our Actions flow not from these Principles, Reason will put a *Query* upon them, and Revelation will *expunge* them from the List of Virtues.—They may be specious in themselves; they may be costly to the Performer; they may even be serviceable to Others. But can no more deserve the Title of *Virtue*, than the Activity of our Sun-fire Officers, in extinguishing the Flames on some insured House, can merit the Name of *Charity*.

DIALOGUE XI.

121

able—even *Cato's* upright Soul, shall doom them to utter Destruction; and *Scipio's* gentle Hand, shall execute the horrid Decree.

Is *this* Virtue? Does Virtue ravage Countries, from the mere Wantonness of Pride, or Lust of Pre-eminence? Does Virtue destroy Millions of Lives, only to aggrandize a particular People, or extend the Dominion of some favourite Empire? If *this* were Virtue, *Brutus* thought too honourably of her Character, when He termed Her an *empty Name*.—I am sure, my *Theron* has juster Notions of Things. He need not be informed, that true Virtue, far from personating the rapacious Harpy, acts as a Father to Others, as a Father to All. And, like HIM, who is both its Pattern and its Author, *goes about doing Good*.

Ther. The most elegant Cane, if plunged into yonder Bason, while the Waters are curled by the Breeze, will appear both crooked and coarse. I cannot but think, the Accusers of human Nature examine her State with a *prejudiced* Understanding. Which has the same perverse Effect upon their Judgment, as those ruffled Waves have upon the Sight.—Or else, they contemplate her Condition with a *melancholy* Mind; which, like a jaundiced Eye, gives every Object a distempered Aspect; darkens the

the chearful ; discolours the beautiful ; and hangs even the Sun in Mourning.

Asp. Rather let this be the Comparison, to illustrate our Point.—View the meanest Piece of Earth, through the *Prismatic* Glass ; and it will appear, not beautiful only, but perfectly splendid. Remove the delusory Medium, and all the sophisticated Finery vanishes. The Indigo, the Orange, the Violet are gone ; and leave nothing to be seen, but a rude unornamented Lump of Clay.—So, if We consider human Nature, according to the *partial* Representations of Self-love ; or contemplate it, in the *flattering* Mirror of some popular Writings ; it may seem regular, holy, excellent. But, if We behold it under the Light, the unerring Light of Revelation, its fancied Charms disappear ; it stands clothed with Deformity ; and is a Spectacle of Commiseration, if not of Horror.

Ther. What Reason have You to father such a Notion upon the sacred Writings?—The sacred Writings inform Us, that Man was made *after the Image of GOD*. This, sure, could not be so dishonourable and depraved a Pattern, as your Discourse would insinuate.

Asp. Far, very far from a dishonourable Pattern ! The Image of GOD is the *consummate Standard* of all Perfection.—In conformity to this admirable Exemplar, our first Parents

DIALOGUE XI. 123

Parents were created; and in this admirable Condition they continued, till by Transgression they *fell*. Fell from the most holy and happy State, into Guilt, Condemnation, and Ruin. —Therefore, when this fatal Catastrophe had taken place, the sacred Historian varies his Style; and with a remarkable Peculiarity, as well as Propriety of Speech, says, Adam *begat a Son in his own**, not in the DIVINE, *Likeness*. That every Reader may advert to this melancholy, but important Truth; it is marked more strongly still; it is enforced by a very emphatical Repetition. *After his own Image*†, *Moses* adds; as contradistinguished to the Image of GOD, mentioned in the preceding Verse. Which Expressions are evidently intended, to denote the Difference between the State, in which Adam was created, and *Setb* was begotten.

Ther. Pray, let me have a succinct, but full Account of this tragical Story. Since all your orthodox Divines lay such a mighty Stress upon the Doctrine of the *Fall*.

Asp. GOD, having formed the human Body out of the Ground, animated the Structure with a living Soul; and transcribed upon this Soul the Image of his blessed SELF. All was Light in the Understanding; all was Rectitude in the Will; and nothing but Harmony

* This is affirmed, not of *Cain*, but of *Setb*, the most excellent of *Adam's* Children, and Father of the holy Seed.

† *בדמותו כצלמו* Gen. v. 3. *Corruptus corruptum.*

in the Affections.—Man, thus endowed, was placed in the delightful Garden of *Eden*; and furnished with every Accommodation, that was necessary to support his Being, or desirable to gratify his Senses.—He was constituted Lord of this lower Creation; and, amidst numberless Indulgencies, received only *one—easy—negative* Command—*not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*.—From this He was to abstain, as a Pledge of his Subjection, and as an Exercise of his Obedience. Bliss and Immortality were to be the Reward of Duty; Misery and Death the Punishment of Disobedience. *In the Day Thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die* *, was the Sanction of the divine Law.

How equitable! How gracious the Terms! Yet, neither the Authority of GOD, could deter Him from breaking them; nor the Goodness of GOD, induce Him to keep them.—Unreasonably discontented even with such advantageous Circumstances, and presumptuously aspiring to be like the MOST HIGH, He hearkened to the Suggestions of the evil Spirit.—In a Word; He violated the Precept, and incurred the Penalty. GOD was just, and Man was undone. He lost his Uprightness †; became

* Gen. ii. 17.

† ——— *Innocence, that as a Veil
Had shadow'd them from knowing Ill, was gone,
Just Confidence, and native Righteousness.* Milt. B. IX. 1054.

became subject to Mortality; and, as the nervous Original expresses it, *Died the Death*.

Ther. True; He became subject to many bodily Infirmities, and to the Necessity of final Dissolution.—But, what has this Sentence, or what have these Sufferings to do, with *your* Notion of universal Depravity in the Mind? The Death, which the Almighty LEGISLATOR threatened, can be opposed only to the Life, which the Almighty CREATOR gave.

Asp. Be it so.—The CREATOR gave, and Man possessed a Life, incomparably more excellent, than that which the Pulse imparts, or the Beasts enjoy. He possessed a *divine Life*; which, according to the Definition of the Apostle, consisted in *Knowledge, in Righteousness, and true Holiness* *. This—which was the distinguishing Glory, and the supreme Felicity of his Nature—this, alas! was extinct.

His Understanding, originally enlightened with Wisdom, was clouded and overwhelmed with Ignorance.—His Heart, once filled with religious Veneration, and warmed with heavenly Love, became alienated from GOD his MAKER.—His Passions and Appetites, instead of moving on, in orderly Array, according to the beauteous Measures of Truth and Duty, grew mutinous; shook off the Government of Reason; and ran wild into the most

* Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10.

most lawless Extravagancies.—In a Word, the whole moral Frame was unhinged, disjointed, broken.

Ther. What Cause have You to suppose, that all this Misery was either included in the Threatening, or introduced by the Fall?

Asp. The Ignorance of fallen Adam was palpable. Witness that absurd Attempt, to hide Himself from the Eye of OMNISCIENCE, among the Trees of the Garden.—His Aversion to the all-gracious GOD was equally plain. Otherwise, He would never have fled from his MAKER; but rather have hasted, and on the Wings of Desire, into the Place of the divine Manifestation.

A strange Variety of *disorderly Passions**, were evidently predominant in his Breast—*Pride*; for He refuses to acknowledge his Guilt, though He cannot but own the Fact—*Ingratitude*; for He obliquely upbraids the CREATOR with his Gift, as though it had been a Snare, rather

* *Milton*, speaking of the unhappy Pair, and describing the Consequences of their Fall, says;

Nor only Tears
Rain'd at their Eyes; but high Winds within
Began to rise, high Passions, Anger, Hate,
Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord, and shook sore
Their inward State of Mind; calm Region once,
And full of Peace; now tost and turbulent!
For, Understanding rul'd a not, and the Will
Heard not her Lora! But, in Subjection now
To sensual Appetite, who from beneath
Usurping, over sovereign Reason claim'd
Superior Sway.

B. IK. 1121.

ther than a Blessing; *The Woman, whom Thou gavest me — Want of natural Affection*; for, He endeavours to cast all the Blame upon the weaker Vessel; and to acquit his obnoxious Self, by impeaching the Wife of his Bosom. — The female Criminal acts the same unhumbled Part: neither takes Shame to Herself; nor gives Glory to GOD; nor puts up a single Petition for Pardon.

As all these Disasters ensued, upon the Breach of the Commandment; they furnish Us, I think, with the best Key to open the Meaning of the prohibitory Sanction. They prove, beyond any Argument, that spiritual Death, and all its Consequences, were comprehended in the Extent of the Threatening.

Ther. How could *one* Act of Disobedience produce such destructive Effects? Erase the fair Image of the GODHEAD; and stamp the Monster, stamp the very Devil, in its Stead? — And so *small* an Act of Disobedience too!

Ass. The *Prohibition*, if You please, was small; not so the Transgression. It was committed against the clearest Knowledge of Duty, and the strongest Obligations to Obedience. It argued Ingratitude for the richest Favours, and Unbelief of the most solemn Declarations. It was an Act of the most horrid Presumption in the Creature, and of the most impious Rebellion against the CREATOR.

As

As to the Smallness, or rather the *gentle* and *benign* Import of the Command, this aggravates, beyond measure, the Crime of Disobedience. Alluding to the Words, once addressed to the *Syrian* General, we may justly expostulate—"O thou *Adam*, if thy LORD
 "had bid Thee do some great Thing *; in
 "Submission to such a high Authority, and
 "out of Gratitude for his unspeakable Good-
 "ness, oughtest Thou not to have done it?
 "How much more, when He says to Thee?
 "—Freely eat of all, except this single Tree.
 "*Thousands, Thousands* of Honours, Privileges,
 "and Gifts be thine; only *one* Acknowledg-
 "ment of thy Subjection, mine. And that
 "the easiest, which thy Heart can wish, or
 "even thy Fancy conceive."

You ask, *How* could one Act of Disobedience produce such destructive Effects?—I answer; The *Reality* of the Fact, in numberless Instances of material Nature, is plain to a Demonstration; while the *Manner* of Operation, remains an impenetrable Secret. Every Child perceives the former; *Newton* himself is at a loss for the latter.—For which Reason, I have always thought it better, to believe what GOD has taught, than attempt to explain, what He has concealed. Let us forego this curious, perhaps fruitless Inquiry; and substitute

* 2 Kings v. 13.

stitute a Remark, which naturally arises from the Subject, and may considerably edify our Minds.

Ther. Edify ! Is it possible to render this dishonourable and afflictive Notion *edifying* ? Can any generous Fruit spring from such a penurious Soil ?

Asp. *Samson*, I believe, had no Expectation of finding any Thing valuable, in the Relics of his slain Lion. But, to his agreeable Disappointment, *there was Honey in the Carcase* *. If our Doctrine appear *ghastly* as the One, it may yield a Benefit *sweet* as the Other.

From hence We may learn (what, when rightly learnt, is more serviceable than all the Sciences) the *extreme Malignity* of Sin.—When *Volcanos* open their tremendous Jaws, and discharge a fiery Inundation ; they confine their Fury to a single Territory.—When *Famine* lifts her mildewed Hand, and destroys the Supports of animal Life ; She is content with ruining a Kingdom or a Nation. When *War* drenches her Sword in Blood, or the *Pestilence* impregnates the Air with Poison ; they also, even they observe some Limits, and never make the whole Compass of Nature the Scene of their Ravages.—But *Sin*, leveled its Blow at the whole human Race. *SIN* poured Contagion, and spread Destruction, through all

VOL. II.

I

Coun-

Countries, and *all* Ages. One *single* Act of Sin brought Confusion and a Curse upon the material, and Miseries, *infinite Millions* of Miseries, on the rational World*.—How then should We fear this *most pernicious* of all Evils! With what Carefulness guard against its insidious Allurements! With what Resolution fly from its killing Caresses!

Ther. I must observe, that You take for granted, what remains to be proved. For, supposing your Account true, with regard to *Adam*; yet, how does this affect his Children? Why must all his Posterity be contaminated, because their Forefather has played the Prodigal? Such a heavy Charge against the whole Body of Mankind will not be admitted, without very cogent Proofs.

Asp. The Proofs are cogent; perhaps irrefragable.—Reason offers to turn Evidence in the Case. Reason, in Concurrence with Revelation, demands; *Who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean* †? If the Fountain be polluted, how can the Streams be pure? And if the Root is corrupt, 'tis impossible to conceive,

* St. *Chrysostom* calls the first Transgression, *ἡ πρώτη λυμαινομένη αμαρτία*. Which is, in a Manner, translated by *Milton*; who, speaking of the same tragical Act, says

It brought Death into the World, and all our Woe.

† *Job* xiv. 4.

conceive, how the Branches should be found, or the Fruit good *.

The scriptural Testimonies are almost innumerable. They pour their Evidence from every Quarter; and constitute, not two or three only, but a whole Cloud of Witnesses. —*GOD made Man upright*, says the royal Preacher; the human Nature in its primitive State, was without any wrong Bias. *But at, and ever since the first Transgression, they have found out and followed many perverse Inventions* †.

Ther. I don't deny, but Multitudes of People, seduced by bad *Example*, or betrayed by their own *Inadvertency*, have departed from the Rule of Duty. Have, as the wise Man affirms, tried many foolish Experiments to acquire Happiness, and devised as many idle Excuses for their Folly. But, this is no such irrefragable Proof, that they were *originally* bad. It only implies, that, not taking proper heed to their Ways, they warped from their native Upright-

* *Milton* has anticipated *Theron's* Objection; and, in *Adam's Soliloquy*, very judiciously solved it.

— *Ab! why should all Mankind
For one Man's Fault, thus guiltless be condemn'd,
If guiltless? But from me what can proceed
But all corrupt, both Body and Mind deprav'd;
Not to do only, but to will the same
With me? How can they acquitted stand
In Sight of GOD?*

Book X. 822.

† *Eccles. vii. 29.*

Uprightness. As yonder *Tulips*, though perfectly beautiful at present, if not attended with the necessary Cultivation, will degenerate into homely Flowers; and, at length, be no better than tawdry Weeds.

Asp. No, my Friend. Iniquity is not an adventitious Thing, caught from Example, or contracted by Carelessness. These may increase, but these do not occasion, the *moral Malady*. A sinful Disposition is as early as our Being: the very Mould, in which all our Faculties are cast.—*David* bears very express Testimony to this humbling Truth. *Behold!* He sets N. B. upon the Passage. 'Tis a sad, but certain Fact. Such as should never depart from my Memory, nor ever be omitted in my Confessions; and is much to be regarded by every Reader. *I was shapen in Wickedness, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me* *. As though he had said—"Alas! LORD, "this Crime, though extremely horrid, is but "a little Part of my Guilt. I have not only "sinned in Practice, but I am totally and "universally corrupt in my very Nature."

This He acknowledges, not to extenuate his Offence, but to lay open his excessive Vileness. And indeed it is not possible, to form a *right Judgment* of Ourselves, or to be *duly humbled* before GOD, unless We add the Depravation

* *Psal.* li. 5.

pravation of our Nature to the Transgressions of our Life. Just as it is impossible to discern, what monstrous and voracious Animals lie hid in the Ocean, if We only glance an Eye upon the Surface of the Waters.

Ther. This, You know, was written by the royal Penitent, under the Pangs of severe Remorse. Does not a Sense of his enormous Iniquity, and the Apprehension of divine Wrath, make his Hand shake, and lead Him to *aggravate* Features?—Or, suppose it were true of the adulterous King, is it equally applicable to Others, who have escaped such gross Pollutions?

Asp. It is no exaggerating Draught, but a faithful Delineation; and exactly represents every Child of *Adam*.—It was written with the utmost Deliberation; and therefore is introduced with that Call for peculiar Attention, *Behold!*—And, though *David* was scandalously criminal in his Intrigue with the Wife of *Uriah*; yet, the *general* Tenour of his Life was not only irreproachable, but exemplary. Who so zealous for the House of his GOD, or so devoted an Admirer of the divine Word? His Heart was an Altar, ever flaming with heavenly Love; and his Tongue a Trumpet, to sound the Praises of JEHOVAH through all Generations.—And if *He* had Reason to make this abasing Confession; who is the Per-

son, that can think Himself aggrieved, by sharing in the Imputation?

One of our most eminent Martyrs*, when He heard of any Malefactor, condemned to suffer an ignominious Death, used to lay his Hand upon his Breast, and say—"The Seeds of all those Villanies, which brought that unhappy Wretch to the Gibbet, were sown *Here*. And, if they have not sprung up into the same detestable Deeds, unto divine Grace, unto divine Grace *alone*, be all the Glory!"

Ther. Your Martyrs had honest Hearts, but not always the clearest Heads. I admire their Zeal, and reverence their Memories: but I can no more receive their Opinion, as an Oracle, than I can be persuaded to worship their Relics.

Asp. I have no Intention to palm Popery on my Friend, nor any Desire to calumniate the human Species. If it be disingenuous and sinful, to asperse a particular Character; how much more unjustifiable, to traduce our Nature in general!

My Account, dark and disgustful as it is, stands confirmed by a higher Authority, than any private Opinion. It is confirmed from an universal Survey of Mankind; taken by the Eye of the CREATOR Himself, and left upon

* Mr. Bradford.

upon Record in the Books of Revelation. *The LORD looked down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, to see if there were Any that did understand, and seek after GOD* *.—What is the Result of this grand Inquiry? It must, without all Peradventure, be infallibly true. Because GOD's Inspection is too keen, to be eluded; and his Judgment too impartial, to be biased. This is the Report, made by the infinitely wise OBSERVER: *They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy* †; *there is None that doeth Good, no not One.*

Ther. This, I apprehend, is the Character of those besotted Creatures, those most egregious of all Fools, *Who say, There is no GOD.* To them the *Psalms* relates, and to them the abandoned Character is appropriated. They have it, if I may so speak, *Cum Privilegio.*

Asp. It is meant rather of practical, than of speculative Atheists. Who say, not *explicitly* with their Mouths, but *implicitly* in their Hearts, *There is no GOD.* Who live, as if there was no ALL-SEEING EYE, to take Cognizance of their present Conduct; no SUPREME JUDGE, to call them to a future Reckon-

* *Psal.* xiv. 2.

† *Psal.* xiv. 2, 3. The two original Words כר נארו are metaphorical Expressions; taken from—*Wines*, that are become *sour*—and *Meats*, that are in a State of *Putrefaction*. I believe, it is impossible to find Images, more strongly expressive of a *total* Depravity, and of the utmost Degeneracy.

Reckoning.—And I dare appeal to Experience, Whether this Instance of *Foolishness*, is not bound up in the Hearts of our Children *. Nay, whether it be not natural to Us all, both in Youth and Manhood, to forget our CREATOR?

In this Case, *Theron*, there is no Monopoly. Your Right and mine, are too strongly established by Experience, and too clearly expressed in the preceding Scripture, to admit of any Controversy.—If there were *Any*, that understood—They are *all* gone out of the Way—There is *None*, that doeth Good—No, not *One*.—Could any Conveyancer in *Europe* have contrived a Form of Words, more fully to ascertain our unhappy Title?

Ther. There may be some Texts in Scripture, which seem to countenance your Assertion. But these refer to the worst of Men, in the worst of Times. And can You, with any Justice, ascribe the Properties of a few Reprobates to the whole Species?

Asp.

* *Prov.* xxii. 15. Let None think, that by *Foolishness* the sacred Writer means only those *filly* Tricks, which discover a Weakness of Understanding in Children. *Solomon's* Fool is not the *Idiot*, but the *Sinner*; and the Folly, stigmatized throughout the Proverbs, denotes, not a Failure in the intellectual, but in the religious and moral Character.

The Words, in this Passage, are peculiarly forcible. *Foolishness* is in the Heart; implanted in the very Nature; sunk deep into the inmost Faculties.—And not only sunk deep, but adheres almost inseparably: קשור is *wrapt*, *tied*, and *bound*: twines like the Ivy, and is rooted like the Oak.

Ass. This very Passage, and others of a like Import, are adopted by St. Paul, and applied both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*: with this professed Design, *that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may be found guilty * before GOD.* Which evinces, I should think, beyond all Doubt, the *Universality* of its Extent.

If to the *Universality*, We add the *Antiquity* of this Fact, it will bear the two grand Characteristics of Truth. Far from being a novel Opinion, it was received as a Maxim, in the early Age of *Job.* *What is Man, that He should pretend to be clean? And He that is born of a Woman, that He should presume to be righteous? Righteous before the infinitely JUST and HOLY ONE! Behold! He putteth no Trust in his Saints, though the most exalted of all rational Beings. Yea, the Heavens, those brightest Parts of the material Creation, are not clean in his Sight. How much more abominable and filthy is Man †? Who drinketh Iniquity, though loth-*
some

* *Rom. iii. 19.* Προδικαζονται, "May become guilty," does not so exactly answer the Scope of the Context, neither does it so solidly establish the Apostle's Argument, as "may be found guilty;" be fully convicted, and apparently liable to most just Condemnation.—Those Things were written of Old, and were quoted by St. Paul; not to render Men criminal, but to prove them so.

† *Job xv. 14, 15, 16.* The immaculate Purity of the blessed GOD, and the utter Depravity of fallen Man, are Points of so great Importance in the scriptural System of
Di-

some to GOD, and worse than Poison to his own Soul : yet drinketh it *like Water* ; without any Hesitation or the least Fear, with an eager and profuse Delight.

This, You will observe, was alledged in a Dispute, carried on with no small Vehemency. Yet is admitted, on all hands, as unexceptionably true.—Be pleased also to take notice, That the Charge is not confined to some very notorious Sinners, but is laid against the whole Body of Mankind. Whatever Figure they may make, each in his own Conceit ; they are all described in the Word of GOD—as *Beings*, insatiably athirst after Evil—from *Objects*, that We cannot endure to behold ; or cannot behold without Abhorrence *.—*Such* is Man by Nature ! People must have Eyes very different from mine, to discern any *Dignity* in this Draught.

Ther. As to innate Dignity, We will let it pass. But this I must insist upon, and several Writers of the first Repute are on my Side.—That we enter the Stage of Life, in a State
of

Divinity, that they are inculcated no less than *three Times*, within the Compass of this single Book. And by much the *same* noble Contrast of striking Images. Chap. iv. 17, 18.—xv. 14, 15, 16.—xxv. 4, 5, 6.

* The original Words are נֶעֱבַר וְנִאֲלַח—One is used to signify that *abominable* Practice, which the *Egyptians* could not bear to see. *Exod.* viii. ver. 22. *Heb. Bib.* ver. 26. *Engl. Bib.*—The other denotes an *Object*, too *squalid* to be viewed without loathing.

of *Indifference* either to Good or Evil.—That the Affections are like a Balance, nicely poised, and preponderating neither one Way nor the other.—The whole Soul, like a Sheet of fair Paper, is equally susceptible of strait or crooked Lines; and will as readily receive the amiable Features of an Angel, as the hideous Deformity of a Devil.

App. With regard to your first Illustration.—The Simile, I think, confutes the Sentiment. For, to be in *Suspence*, whether We shall love the LORD our GOD, the Giver of all Good, and the Source of all Perfection; this, surely, must be condemned as an irreligious Temper.—This is a criminal Halting between GOD and *Baal*.—A Neutrality, which is no better than Hostility.

I fear, the Writers You mention, pay but little Deference to the inspired Volume. Our Escutcheon is very differently blazoned, in that Office of spiritual Heraldry. *A Transgressor from the Womb* *, is one of our hereditary Titles. Transgressors We are, by strong internal Propensity; even before We transgress, in outward Act.

Observe

* *Isai.* xlviii. 8. A Truth so apparent and undeniable, that *Seneca* could not but *discern* it, though He was an *un-illighted* Heathen: could not but *acknowledge* it, though He was one of the *proud Stoic Sect*. *Hac Conditione nati sumus. Animalia obnoxia non paucioribus Animi quam Corporis Morbis.* De Ira. Lib. II. c. 9.

Observe the young *Hawthorn* Plants, that have unfolded their green Leaves, in yonder Nursery ; but have scarce learned to spread the gay Blossom. Is there in those an equal Aptitude, to produce the luscious juicy Grape, or their own coarse and husky Berry ? By no means. They will (unless grafted with some generous Cyon) *certainly, universally, constantly* bear the same harsh Fruit with their parent Tree.—So certainly will the human Mind, if not renewed by the SPIRIT of *CHRIST*, branch out into ungodly Tempers, and bring forth wicked Practices.

Tber. The Nobleman, mentioned by *Xenophon* *, when overcome by an alluring Temptation, devised for his Excuse the Notion of two Souls ; one, that inclined Him to Vice ; another, that prompted Him to Virtue. This was a moderate *Caricatura* †, compared with my Friend's. He will allow nothing regular or graceful in the human Heart.—You have metamorphosed the Master-piece of the Creation, into such a deformed Object ; as may justly render Him a Terror to Himself. Can there be a grosser Libel upon the CREATOR, or a greater Discouragement to our Fellow-creatures ?

Asp.

* *Cyropæd.* Lib. VI.

† A Term used by the *Italian* Painters, to signify a Resemblance *horrid*, or *ridiculous*.

Asp. If this be a distorted Piece, what will You call the following Description? *GOD* saw that the *Wickedness of Man*, was great upon the *Earth*; and that every *Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart*, was only evil continually*.

—This, perhaps, may be reckoned a more monstrous Drawing still. Yet it came from that Hand, which painted the Canopy of the Skies, and touched all the Pictures of Nature into such inimitable Perfection.

Pray, let us examine the most distinguishing Features in this Draught.—Not barely the Works of his Hand, or the Words of his Tongue, but the *Imaginations of his Heart*, are evil. The Contagion has spread itself through the inner Man. It has tainted the Seat of his Principles, and the Source of his Actions.—Is there not, You will say, some Mixture of Good? No; they are *only* Evil. There is no hopeful Tendency. Not so much as a little Leaven of Piety;—that may have a Chance to diffuse itself, and meliorate the whole Lump.—But are there no lucid Intervals? No happy Moments, when Virtue gains the Ascendency? None: He is only evil *continually*. The Usurpation of Sin is total, and its Tyranny perpetual.

What I have advanced, therefore, is no Libel upon the CREATOR's Benignity. Because, it is the very Echo of his own Determination.

* *Gen.* vi. 5.

mination.—Neither is it so properly discouraging, as humbling and alarming to our Fellow-creatures. *Humbling*, to make Us sensible of our Ruin: *Alarming*, to make Us desirous of a Recovery.

Ther. Is not this Description peculiar to the Men of that wicked Generation? Whose Guilt was as unparalleled, as their Punishment?

Asp. It is applicable both to them and their Successors. The Wisdom of GOD *repeats* the Charge, and fixes it upon the Race, that survived the Flood. The Depravity of human Nature continued, nor could the Waters of an universal Deluge purge it away. So deep alas! is the Stain, and so incorrigible the Virulency, of original Corruption; that it will yield to nothing—to nothing will it yield, but to the *Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the HOLY GHOST* *. Till this takes place, every Heart of Man must wear the Prophet's stigmatizing Motto, *Deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked.*

Ther. This Passage, I am informed, is not rightly translated; especially, in the *last* Expression. The *Hebrew* Original does not bear so hard upon the human Character, as the *English* Version.

Asp. You allow then, that the Heart is *deceitful*. And of this We have a glaring Proof, in

* Tit. iii. 5.

in the Conduct of *Hazael*. He thought it impossible, that He should ever perpetrate such horrid Barbarities, as the Prophet foresaw. *Is thy Servant a Dog, that He should do this great Thing *?* Yes, *Hazael*; however Thou mayest imagine Thyself gentle as a Lamb, thou art fierce as a Dog, and savage as a Tyger.—Which was most terribly demonstrated by the Event.

Suppose, we translate the other Word more accurately. The little Alteration will be of less Service to your Cause. Instead of desperately wicked, You may, if You please, read *deplorably disordered* †. This is the exact Import of the Phrase.—It is a Metaphor, derived from a very distempered Body. In which, the whole Head is sick, and the whole Heart faint. *From the Crown of whose Head, to the Sole of whose Feet*, there is nothing but consuming Disease, and enfeebling Languors ‡.—The Rules of Civility may set a specious Varnish on the Conversation. But until Grace, sanctifying Grace administers the Remedy, the most civilized Heart will be like the pale emaciated Check, that is poorly invivified with Paint.

Ther.

* 2 Kings viii. 13. † Jer. xvii. 3. *וְנִכְרָה*

‡ *Isai.* i. 6. Agreeable to this Doctrine, and consonant to this Metaphor, is the Confession of our Liturgy, *There is no Health in Us.*

Ther. What say the Writers of the New Testament? Is not *their* Way of thinking more liberal and benign?—If human Nature wore so *bideous* an Aspect, under the legal Dispensation; since the Coming of our LORD, and the Publishing of his Gospel, One may expect an improved and more pleasing Face of Things.

Assp. Human Nature in *every* Period of Time, and under every Dispensation of Religion, is still the *same*. It was the SPIRIT of *CHRIST*, who indited the Old Testament, and He cannot vary from Himself, in the Declarations of the New.

I am very much inclined to believe, That all the *bodily* Diseases, which our divine PHYSICIAN healed, during his Abode on Earth, were so many emblematical Representations of *spiritual* Disorders. Which, like certain Family Distempers, may be said to run in the Blood of all Mankind.—Will you give me leave, *Theron*, to explain myself? I don't like to ingross the Discourse. Yet I would willingly enlarge upon this Subject.

Ther. By all means. The Laws of Argument, separate from the Indulgencies of Friendship, give you a Warrant to urge, whatever may support your Cause.—Besides, I shall be glad to hear your Sentiments upon a Point so curious.

Assp.

Asp. The poor *Leper*, covered with noisome Sores, is the very Picture of a *polluted Sinner*. Was the One, for his contagious Impurities, separated from the Society of his Fellow-citizens? So shall the other, for his abominable Uncleanness, be banished from the beatific Presence: Unless He be cleansed by the Blood, and justified by the Righteousness of *JESUS*.

You pity the Condition of that unhappy Creature, who was born *blind*. His Eyes rolled, but rolled in vain, to find the dawning Ray. Such is the benighted State of the human Mind, till ALMIGHTY GOODNESS command the Scales of Ignorance to fall off, and pour heavenly Day through all the intellectual Faculties. Then, and not till then, we begin to know the Holiness, the Justice, the adorable Excellencies of GOD.—We see the sublime Purity of his Law, and the extreme Depravity of our own Souls.—We are brought acquainted with the transcendent Glories of our REDEEMER's Person, and apprehend that most comfortable Mystery of his Substitution in our Stead. We discern the ineffable Perfection of his Merits, and the divinely rich Freeness of his Grace*. Truths, incomparably more delightful to the Soul, than all
the

* This, and the preceding Particulars, are Lessons of the last Importance in the *Christian School*. The Knowledge of them deserves to be most solicitously sought, both by attentive

the delectable Scenes of Creation are to the Sight.

The Paralytic's *enervated* Limbs too truly represent the Impotence of our Nature. Was He unable to grind at a Mill; to run in a Race; or to turn Himself on His Bed? So unable are We, to fight the good Fight of Faith; to exercise the Graces of Christianity; or even to turn Ourselves unto GOD.—Do not you, my Friend, experience something of this Inability? For *my* Part, I must lay my Hand on my Breast, and daily, hourly confess, "*The Palsy is Here.* Though not altogether dead in Sin (blessed be CHRIST JESUS, and his quickening SPIRIT!) yet how languid is my Zeal, how enfeebled my Industry, in the great Affair of everlasting Salvation! I would fain believe the Promises of the faithful JEHOVAH; but how often do I stagger through Unbelief! I would fain love the LORD my GOD with all my Heart; but Oh! what Coldness benumbs my Affections! I wish to be humble in every Thought; heavenly in all my Desires; and wholly resigned to the divine Will. But, alas! my Sufficiency for these Things, is like the *flaccid* Sinew, or the *withered* Arm."

It

tentive Contemplation, and by earnest Prayer. For, to know them, is to be *truly wise*; to be influenced by them, is to be *substantially happy*.

It would be endless to particularize all the Maladies, which were Emblems of our Misery, and the Triumphs of our LORD's Power. Let me only remark—That their Bodies were afflicted with a *single* Disorder; our Souls labour under a *Complication* of Evils.—They *felt* their Affliction, and were desirous, importunately desirous of Relief. We are, till awakened from above, insensible of our calamitous Case. We add, to all our other Indispositions, a stupefying Lethargy, or an extravagant Delirium.

Ther. Such allegorical Expositions of Scripture are pretty enough. But, I presume, You yourself cannot reckon them *demonstrative*. For my own Part, I must appeal from the Surmises of Fancy, to the Verdict of Reason.

Asp. I cannot think, that the allegorical Sense, when *soberly* introduced, is unworthy our Regard, or without its Weight. However, I have no Design to preclude your Appeal.—Will the avowed, will the reiterated Decision of an Apostle, satisfy my Friend, and be admitted as the Verdict of Reason?—St. Paul has declared of Himself; *in me, that is, in my Flesh*, or unrenewed Nature, *dwelleth no Good**; no good Temper, nor so much as any good Desire.—Elsewhere he affirms; That *the carnal Mind*, or unregenerate Soul, *is not* subject

K 2

* Rom. vii. 18.

subject to the Law of GOD. Nay, is an Enemy, or rather *Enmity* itself *—against what?—Against Sin? That were a noble Antipathy.—Against the World? That were a laudable Disaffection.—No; but against GOD and his Law. Amazing Perverseness! To be Enmity against GOD; who is boundless Benignity, and consummate Goodness. Enmity against his Law; which is the Transcript of his amiable Perfections, and the faultless Model of all Virtue.

Ther. This, I suppose, is the Character of *Saul the Pharisee*, not of *Paul the Apostle*. Descriptive of his Condition, when He was “a Blasphemer, a Persecutor, and injurious.”

Asp. It relates not to Himself alone, but is applicable to All, who continue in a State of Nature.—The blessed AUTHOR of our Being, speaking of Mankind in general, says; That *He is even Flesh* †: He is incapable of relishing heavenly Things, and wholly enslaved to

* *Rom. viii. 7.*

† *Gen. vi. 3.* The Word *Flesh*, by which the all-wise CREATOR characterizes Man, signifies, among the sacred Writers, whatever is *dishonourable* in itself; *provoking* to GOD; or introductory to the *Ruin* of Man.—The *Works of the Flesh*, are a Compendium of all Iniquity. *Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.*—To *walk in the Flesh*, is the very Reverse of walking in the SPIRIT; diametrically opposite to the divine Law and true Holiness. *Rom. viii. 4.*—To be *carnally minded*, or to have the Influence, the Savour, the Relish of the *Flesh* (*Φρονημα σαρκος*) predominant in our Minds, is the spiritual Death of the Soul; and a Presage of eternal Death, both in Body and Soul, *Rom. viii. 6.*

to fleshly Appetites.—The beneficent RESTORER of our Happiness, pronounces the same Sentence, in the very same Words: *That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh**: The Faculties, which Men receive by their natural Birth, have a carnal Bias; incline to nothing, but sordid Pleasures, and ignoble Pursuits.—Our SAVIOUR reinkulcates the Admonition, and illustrates it by a very remarkable Allusion. You cannot forget his Answer to a procrastinating Disciple; *Let the Dead bury their Dead†*: Intimating, that as many as are unsanctified by the HOLY GHOST, though possessed of an animal, are destitute of the divine Life; are no more fit for the Kingdom of Heaven, for its Converse or its Joys, than a pale Corpse in the Coffin, or dry Bones in the Charnel-house, are qualified to transact any secular Business.

St. Paul sets the Seal of Heaven to this momentous Truth, in various Passages of his Epistles. From a Multitude let me select one, and recommend it to your serious Consideration. *You, that were sometime alienated and Enemies*: the *Colossians*, and all Mankind were alienated from the living GOD; had no true Knowledge of Him; and, what is worse, had no sincere Desire after Him. Nay; they were not only Strangers, but Enemies; in a State

K 3

of

* John iii. 6.

† Matt. viii. 22.

of Hostility to his holy Nature and heavenly Will.—What can express a greater Degeneracy? Nothing, unless it be the following Clause: *by a Mind intent upon wicked Works* *. A Mind, not only averse to all Good, but passionately prone to all Evil.

Ther. A few picked Passages, of a figurative Import, and artfully clogged by some dextrous Interpretation, may seem to support your Cause.

Asp. Ah! *Theron*, there is no need to use Sleight of Hand. He that runs, may read this Doctrine in the sacred Authors. It is interwoven with the whole Series of their *historical*, and makes a professed Part of their *practical* Writings.

What is more common with the inspired Penmen, than to express a profligate Course of Life, *by following our own Imaginations, and walking in our own Ways*? When Immorality and Licentiousness were predominant in *Israel*; knew no Restraints, and kept no Bounds; how does the unerring Historian describe this
horrible

* *Colos. i. 21.* Τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐν τοῖς ἰσχυοῖς τοῖς ἁμαρτωίοις. *Mente malis Operibus intenta.* An eminent Critic would thus point, and thus translate the Words. And assigns, for his Alteration, the following Reason; *Mens enim dicitur esse in ea Re, quam semper cogitat, ad quam Cupidine fertur & inclinatur.* Davenant in loc.—Let the Words be pointed and translated, either in *this* or the *received* Manner, they speak the Language, and confirm the Sentiments, of this whole Dialogue.

DIALOGUE XI 151

horrible State of Things? *Every One did that which was right in his own Eyes* *. Nothing can more strongly imply the total Depravity of Mankind, than such a Phraseology. Which makes it one and the same Thing, to pursue our *natural* Inclinations; and to act the abandoned Sinner.

St. *Jude* cannot write a few Lines, but He must touch upon this Subject; must teach this humbling Lesson. *Sensual* †, He says, *not having the SPIRIT*. According to his Estimate, not to be actuated by the Power of especial Grace, is to remain under the Dominion of Sensuality. *Every Man*, while unrenewed by the divine SPIRIT, is governed by Flesh and Sense. Can *any* Man then pretend to be originally free from the Influence of Corruption?

St. *Paul* exempts not Himself, no, nor the highest Saints, from the opprobrious Charge: *We all walked according to the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind*. Which Desires in *Us*, as well as in the idolatrous *Heathens*, were base, sordid, and contaminating. Infomuch that *We*, who are *Jews* by Birth; who are
Sons

* *Judg.* xvii. 6.—See also *Psal.* lxxxi. 12. *Ecclef.* xi. 9. *Acts* xiv. 16.

† *Jude* 19. The original Expression is *Ψυχικου*, and denotes Persons, who have no higher Principle, than the *animal* Life, and *rational* Soul.

Sons of GOD by our new Birth; even We were by Nature the Children of Wrath*.

Ther. What says St. James? I had almost forgot his Testimony; though it is so very pertinent to my Purpose, and so very explicit in my Favour. Men, who are made after the Similitude of GOD,—The Similitude of GOD signifies, in the sacred Books, those moral Endowments, which distinguish the Possessor both from the Brute and the Devil. And if Men are made after this Image, or vested with these Endowments, where is your Doctrine of original Sin?

Assp. I began to flatter myself, that your Objections were exhausted. But, since I am mistaken in this Particular; surely it must be as great a Mistake to imagine, that the Apostle would maintain an Opinion, so repugnant to the aforementioned Texts, and so contrary to universal Observation.—Do not You perceive the very Reverse true, with regard to your own Children? Why do You address them with such tender Intreaties; such warm Exhortations; such repeated Arguments? Why do You allure them to Duty by Promises, and deter them from Transgression by Threatenings? Is all this Regimen, all this Discipline, necessary

* *Eph. ii. 3. Hoc uno Loco, says Beza, quasi Fulmine, totus Homo, quantus quantus est, prostrernitur. Neque enim Naturam dicis læsam, sed mortuam, per Peccatum; ideoque Iræ obnoxiam.*

fary for Creatures, that bear the holy Image of GOD.

They made after the Similitude of GOD!—

Then they have no need of the *renewing* Influences of the HOLY GHOST, in case they live; and no need of the *Atonement* of CHRIST's Blood, in case they die. Would James the LORD's Brother assert such an egregious Error; as not only opposes a single Article, but undermines the *whole* Constitution of Christianity? Sets aside the Sanctification of the DIVINE SPIRIT, and the Propitiation of the REDEEMER's Death?—Impossible for Him to assert! Impossible, I should think, for Us to suppose!

St. James speaks of a Fact that is *past*: speaks of Men *collectively*, as they were all included in their first Parent. The Passage, I apprehend, should be translated, not, Men that *are*, but, Men that *were* * created, &c.—The Scripture considers *Adam*, as the common Parent of Us all: nay more, considers Us all as existing in our great Progenitor. Which is so far from overthrowing, that it establishes, the Point in Debate. For, if We were all created after the Similitude of GOD, in and with

* Jam. iii. 9. That this is the precise Signification of the Participle *γεγονως*, may be gathered from 1 Tim. v. 9. Where *γεγονωια* is translated *having been*; and must necessarily refer, not to the *present*, but to the *past* Condition of the Widow.

with *Adam*; it must follow, that We all fell from our Conformity to GOD, in and with *Adam*. And if so—let me for once retort my Friend's Interrogatory—Where is *not* original Sin?

I am very sure, it runs through our *Liturgy*; is an essential Part of our *Articles*; and most strongly delineated in our *Homilies*. Shall I produce some of those Testimonies; which are as clear, as they are copious?

Ther. No more of your Testimonies, good *Aspasio*. Inform me rather, what *Advantage* can accrue from your inculcating, or my adopting such a Doctrine. Suppose, it were undeniably true; disagreeable Truths, like disagreeable Objects, should be consigned over to Obscurity, not obtruded upon our View.—On such an Occasion, the Reply of *Themistocles* should be mine. One of the *Literati* of *Greece*, offered to communicate an elaborate and curious Invention. By means of which, his Memory should be so wonderfully strengthened, as to retain whatever He read or heard. “My Friend, replied the Hero, You quite mistake the Way to serve me. I want to learn the Art, not of *remembering*, but of *forgetting*.”

Asp. If to forget our Disease, were a likely Method to *restore* our Health, I should readily concur in your Hero's Way of Thinking. As
this

DIALOGUE XI. 155

this will hardly be allowed, I cannot but judge it more adviseable, to remember our Disease, that We may inquire after a Remedy.

Ther. Where is this Remedy to be had?

Ass. Not on Earth, but from Heaven.—

The Schools of Science cannot discover it. The Courts of Kings are unable to procure it. The College of Physicians know not how to prescribe it. But the Gospel of our Salvation both prescribes and dispenses it. The Language of *CHRIST* in his holy Word is, *I will bring Her Health and Cure**. And the Beginning of our Cure is, to be sensible of our Disorder.

Hence We are taught to be *humble*.—To review the Catalogue of our actual Transgressions, is a mortifying Employ. But that which lays the Soul in the lowest Abasement, is the Conviction of *inbred* Iniquity. This strikes at the Root of human Vanity, and cuts asunder the very Sinews of Self-conceit. Blindness in the Understanding; Impotency in the Will; Disorder in the Affections; these are not *Visitants*, but † *Inhabitants*; congenial with our Frame, and ingrained in our Constitution. How then—O! how can *We* be vain of our moral Beauty, who have an hereditary Defilement cleaving to all our Faculties? Surely, this must banish the *Pharisee* from our Breast, and

* *Jer.* xxxiii. 6.

† Called therefore *ἡ οἰκουμένη ἐν ἐμοὶ ἀνομιή*, Sin that dwelleth in me. *Rom.* vii. 17.

and inspire Us with the Sentiments of that sincere Penitent, *Behold! I am vile**! Must teach Us the Language of the abashed Leper, *Unclean! Unclean †!*

Ther. I should think, it would make Us *melancholy*, rather than humble. Serve no other Purpose, than to introduce an afflictive Sense of extreme Wretchedness.

Asp. Did We intend to rest Here, your Apprehensions would be just. But We urge the Doctrine of original Corruption, as a *Preparative* for the Redemption of *CHRIST*.

It is observable, that very Few applied to the blessed *JESUS* in the Days of his Flesh, but the Sons and Daughters of Affliction. The Levee of that *PRINCE* of *PEACE*, was crowded by the *Lame*, the *Blind*, the *Maimed*. These, being sensible of Distress, and longing for Relief, fell as humble Supplicants at his Feet. While Others, who were firm in their Health, and gay in their Spirits, rejected Him with contemptuous Scorn.—When We perceive “the Plague of our Heart,” and feel those worse than ulcerous Sores, which overspread our Nature; We also shall ardently seek to *the LORD* our Healer. When we find Ourselves subject to the Curse of the Law, in Bondage to the Tyranny of Satan, and liable to everlasting Damnation; *then* the divine *REDEEMER* will be precious indeed.—Whereas,

if

* *Job* xl. 4.

† *Lev.* xiii. 45.

if We remain insensible of our Misery, the Gospel, which is *saving Health* to the contrite Soul, will be an unaffecting Story to our Ears. We may hear it, We may read it, as an amusing Narrative; but shall not *receive* it, as a sovereign Remedy.

Ther. Not receive the Gospel! I hardly understand what You mean. I often study the Gospel; I believe it to be a divine Revelation; and endeavour to follow its Directions.—I look upon it, as containing the most refined System of Morality; as enforcing every Virtue, by the strongest Motives; and recommending all, by the most amiable Example.

Ass. But what think You of one grand Doctrine, one very distinguishing Privilege of the Gospel? I mean the Doctrine and the Privilege of *spiritual Regeneration*. Exclusive of which, all your Endeavours to possess Virtue and practise Morality, are like Endeavours to fly without Wings, or to run without Feet.

While unimpressed with a Sense of our original Depravity, We shall probably sit down contented with some *superficial* Reformation, and not aspire after a Renewal of the Heart. *Civility* will pass for Sanctity, and a *temperate* Disposition for a gracious Habit.—Why is the New Birth, why are all the saving Operations of the blessed SPIRIT, disregarded by some, derided by Others? Because, these Persons are insensible of their utter Impotency to all Good,
and

and their abject Slavery to all Evil. Therefore, they see no Reason for *this* divine Agency, or for *that* universal Change.

You also, my dear Friend, while unacquainted with your natural Corruption, cannot apprehend either the Reasonableness or the Necessity, of being *renewed in the Spirit of your Mind* *. But when Experience has taught You the former, You will want no Arguments to convince You of the latter.—Can Creatures, who are *blind* in their Understandings, discern the Things which belong to their eternal Peace?—Can Creatures, who are *dead* in Sin, exercise the Graces, or discharge the Duties, of a Christian Life?—Can Creatures, whose Hearts are *Enmity* against GOD, either delight to do his Will Here, or be meet for his beatific Presence Hereafter?

Under the Influence of such Convictions, that new Birth, which the Gospel of *CHRIST* promises, which the SPIRIT of GOD produces, will appear as necessary for your State, and be as welcome to your Soul, as these gentle *Dews* are necessary for the languishing Herbs, and welcome to the thirsty Soil.

Ther. The Dews, though refreshing to the Flowers, may be too chilly for our Constitutions. And see! The Star of Evening, by proclaiming the Approach of Night, has given Us a Warning to quit our Arbour.—Some other

* Eph. iv. 23.

DIALOGUE XI. 159

Other Time We must resume this Inquiry. For I am by no means satisfied, that your Theory agrees with Experience.

Ass. I fear, I have already kept You out too long. Let me just observe, as We go in— That the Doctrine, however disagreeable in itself, is conducted to a *beneficial* Issue. It is productive of a much more substantial Consolation, than History assigns to the great, but exiled *Marius*. When he fled with his ruined Circumstances, to linger out the poor Remains of Life among the Ruins of *Carthage*, what was his chief Support? “Contemplating, says my Author, that famous City in the Dust, He was the less afflicted with his own Downfal *.”

We have not been put off with such cold Comforts, such *negative* Benefits. The Belief of original Sin has a Tendency—To make Us *humble*—To shew Us our *Need* of *CHRIST*—To create in Us a Hunger and Thirst after the *renewing* Influences of his *SPIRIT*, and the justifying Merit of his Righteousness.—So that it must be owing to our own Perverseness, or our own Negligence, if We do not levy a *Tax* upon our *Loss*, and *rise* even by our *Fall*.

* *Inopem Vitam in Fugurio Ruinarum Carthagenensium toleravit: cum Marius aspiciens Carthaginem, illa intuens Marium, alter alteri possent esse Solatio.* Vell. Patern.



DIALOGUE XII.



HE Sun was fiercely bright, and the Sky without a Cloud—Not a Breath fanned the Woods; not a Gale curled the Stream.—The Fields, exposed to all the fiery Beams, were like a glowing Hearth.—The little Birds, overcome by the potent Influence, lost for a while their tuneful Notes. Nothing was heard in the Garden, but the drowsy Hum of Bees, and the Moan-like Buz of winged Insects.—All Nature seemed to *languish*. The flourishing Meads looked sickly; the gayest Blossoms began to fade; and the sprightliest Animals, if not reposed under some cooling Shelter, panted for Breath, amidst the all-surrounding Blaze and the unsufferable Heat.

Aspasio disappeared ever since Dinner, and none could tell, whither He was gone.—*The-ron*, as soon as the Tea-Equipage was removed,

moved, took his Way to the *Wood*. Desirous of the thickest Shade, He hastened to the Center. A serpentine Walk composed the Avenue; which, after several Windings, delivered Him into a large circular Area: not covered with a *Græcian* or *Roman* Temple, unmeaning Imitation of Pagan Idolatry: but surrounded with aged and princely Oaks. The Coalition of whose Branches, threw over the grassy Plat a majestic rural Dome; and their unpierced Foliage, *imbrowned the Noon-tide Hours*.

In the Midst, and elevated on a square Base, was a Statue representing the venerable *Elijah*—on his bended Knees—with Hands stretched out, and Eyes lifted up to Heaven. His Attitude, his Air, his every Feature, were a most lively Comment on those strong energetic Expressions of Scripture; *take hold on GOD* *; *wrestle with the ALMIGHTY* †; *pour out your Hearts before him* ‡.—On one Side of the Pedestal, were engraven the Priests of *Baal*; in frantic Emotions calling upon their senseless Deity, and gashing themselves with unavailing Wounds.—On the other was exhibited, in Basso-relievo, the adoring *Tishbite's* Altar; his Victim burning with Fire from the LORD, even while the Water ran from every Limb, and overflowed the Trench below.

A re-

* *Isai. lxiv. 7.*

† *Coloss. iv. 12.* Ἀγωνίζου μετὰ τοῦ κυρίου.

‡ *Psal. lxii. 8.*

A remote Cascade tumbled from a craggy Rock. The Stream, after having wasted its silver Foam in a winding Progress, straggled into this grand Arbour. Here, it just appeared, gliding down a gentle Slope, with a flaunting Air, and a prattling Noise. Impressed, as it were, with the unexpected Solemnity of the Scene, it seemed to check its wanton Waves, and turned aside into a more sequestred Path. As some *beedless* Trifler, that bolts unawares into the royal Presence, stands struck with Reverence and Awe, or retires with Precipitance and Confusion.

The deep Gloom, shedding a Kind of Night, even while the Sun glared in the Sky—Not a Whisper stirring, among so many Millions of Leaves; and all their warbling Natives hushed in Silence.—The sonorous *Toll* of the distant Cascade, and the tinkling *Chime* of the nearer Rill—The profound Adoration, and fervent Devotion, that lived in the Lineaments of the impassioned Stone—All these Circumstances rendered the Place prodigiously august and striking. Not much unlike the antient *Oratories**; where holy People retired from the giddy

* It is thought by some eminent Critics, that when our LORD continued all Night *en προσευχη Θεου*, Luke vi. 12. The Phrase denotes his Continuance in an *Oratory*; a Place set apart for Prayer, and a devout Intercourse with GOD.

That there were Places of this Kind among the *Jews*, is indisputable; and that the Opinion is ingenious, cannot be denied.

giddy Ring, and the bustling Croud, to ennoble their Minds, with sublime Contemplation. Where, they bid a temporary Adieu to the tumultuous World, its gay Impertinence and solemn Dulness; in order to maintain a more uninterrupted Communion with that MIGHTY BEING, who *sitteth upon the Circle of the Earth, and the Inhabitants thereof are as Grasshoppers before Him* *.

Welcome

denied. But I very much doubt, whether it gives Us the true Meaning of the Evangelist—Having mentioned a *Mountain*, it would hardly suit his concise Manner, to be more particular with regard to the Place; neither was the Circumstance so important, as to deserve a second Mention.—I am apt to think also, that *such a Place* would have defeated the Design of our SAVIOUR's Retirement, which seems to have been Privacy; and that *such a Title*, as GOD's Place of Prayer, was wholly appropriated to the Temple.

I apprehend, We shall have a more *defensible*, and I am persuaded, We shall have a more *exalted* Sense, if We suppose the Expression to signify—the Copiousness and Fervour of our LORD's Devotion—the vast Importance, and the unequalled Success, of this his solemn Prayer. Which could no way be more emphatically declared, than by the Addition of the divine Name.—See *Assaf's* Remark, p. 45.

* *Isai. lx. 22.* What a noble *Image* is here, and what an exquisitely fine *Contrast*! GOD, the great GOD, sitteth on those lofty and immense Heavens, which, at an inconceivable Distance, surround this pensile Globe. From that most sublime and magnificent Throne, he looks down upon the Inhabitants of the Earth. Who—in all their Pomp and Splendour—amidst all their admired Works, and boasted Acquisitions—are *mean* and *impotent* in his Sight. Mean and impotent as the poor Insects, that wander over the parched Heath for Sustenance: that spend all the Day in idle insignificant Chirpings: and, at Night, take up their contemptible Habitation on a Blade of Grass.

Welcome to *Theron*, was the shady Bower; welcome the cool Aspect, and the musical Flow of the Water; but more welcome than all, was the Sight of his Friend. Who lay reclined at the Foot of an Oak; with a Book half open in his Hand, and his Eye fixed upon the Statue.

Ther. I know not, *Aspasio*, whether I must make an Apology, for breaking in upon your Retirement; or call You to an Account, for depriving the Ladies of your Company at the Tea-table.

Asp. Indeed, *Theron*, I have been so much delighted with the Place; with the Companion in my Hand; and the noble Object before me; that I scarce observed, how the Time stole away. And I flatter myself, if You will take a Seat by my Side, and share my Entertainment; You will be more inclined to excuse, than to aggravate my Fault.

Ther. Is *Tully* then (for I observe his Name on the Volume) your Companion? And can such a devoted Admirer of the *Bible*, be so highly charmed with a *Heathen Classic*?—St. *Augustine* somewhere declares, that, though passionately fond, before his Conversion, of *Tully's* Writings; yet, after his Conversion, He could not relish those admired Compositions; because they were not sweetened, as He expresses Himself, with the mellifluous Name of *JESUS*.

Asp.

Asp. I am far from pretending to such an exalted Pitch of Devotion, as that seraphic Father attained. I can spend a vacant Minute on the delicate Odes of *Horace*; and taste a refined Entertainment in *Virgil's* beautiful Poem. But when I hear a *Sermon*, or peruse a *religious* Treatise, that borrows neither Dignity nor Charms from that amiable and glorious Name, I own myself extremely disappointed. Without the Person, the Offices, or the Grace of *CHRIST*, the Sermon and the Treatise appear as *defective*, as a Body that is neither adorned with the Head, nor invivified with the Heart.

Tber. I suppose then You cultivate an Acquaintance with the *Grecian* and *Roman* Authors, in order to improve your Taste, and polish your Style.

Asp. These, and I am apt to think, more considerable Advantages than these, may be derived from an occasional Application to their Works. They may serve as so many Shades, to set off, with *heightened* Lustre, the Beauty and Glory of the sacred Oracles.

While I peruse *Plato's* ornamented Page, or listen to *Cicero's* flowing Periods, I am somewhat like the Person, who amuses Himself in a Gallery of *painted* Flowers. He is pleased with the curious Creation of the Pencil. But, finds none of that *delicious* Fragrance, none

of those *breathing* Sweets, which meet Him in the Garden, and regale his Sense from the blooming Parterre.—So, here are brilliant Sentiments, and a florid Diction; delicate Touches of Wit, and bold Strokes of Description. But, no Discovery of *CHRIST* *JESUS*—no Displays of his ineffable Love—no Overtures of Reconciliation with the blessed *GOD*. Nothing to yield Us *solid* Comfort, in our present State; or any *joyful* Expectations, with regard to the approaching Eternity.

Besides; when I converse with those celebrated Geniuses of Antiquity, that were at once the most erroneous, and the most judicious—the *most judicious*, in their Taste of polite Literature; the *most erroneous*, in their Apprehensions of invisible Things; they shew me, what they never intended, the inexpressible Need of *Revelation*. They teach me to set a higher Value on that inestimable Gift. I bless the distinguishing Goodness of Providence, which has cast my Lot *, not at *Athens*, but in *IMMANUEL*'s Land. I say, with Wonder and Gratitude—“Why did not *my* “Existence commence, in those *Æras* of religious

* Alluding to the Story of the Philosopher, who used to bless the Gods for three Privileges.—That He was made, not a *Brute*, but a *rational* Creature.—That He was born, not in *barbarous* Climes, but in *Greece*.—That He lived, not in the more *uncultivated* Ages, but in the Time and under the Tuition of *Socrates*.

“ligious Dotage? Why was not *my* Portion
 “confined, to those Regions of Barbarism and
 “Delusion? Why am not I burning Incense
 “to Idols; paying senseless Adoration to sculp-
 “tured Stone; or worshipping, with detest-
 “able Ceremonies, a Set of lascivious, de-
 “bauched, and scandalous * Deities?”—Sure-
 ly, *Theron*, from every Perusal of those Vo-
 lumes, attended with such a Reflection, We
 shall see the utmost Reason to magnify the
 tender Mercies of our GOD; whereby the Day-
 spring from on high hath visited Us †, and
 brought Us out of Darkness into the marvel-
 ous Light of the Gospel.

Permit me to mention another Benefit, that
 may result from a Correspondence with those
 masterly Writers.—The Streams may lead Us
 to the inexhaustible Fountain. Lead Us to
 admire the *only wise* GOD our SAVIOUR,
 who has given such a shining Vein of In-
 genuity

* This, I think, gives Us the most deplorable and horrid
 Idea of the *Blindness* of our fallen Nature. The Heathens,
 even amidst all the Politeness of their Taste, and notwith-
 standing their superior Advancement in the Sciences, were
 Haters of the true GOD, and robbed Him of his Honour:
 nay, what is unspeakably worse, they paid it to *Monsters*—
 Monsters of Lewdness and Treachery, Vice and Immora-
 lity. Egregious, sottish, almost incredible Stupidity! To
 worship those Beings, which deserved universal Abhorrence!
 To deify those Characters, which could never be sufficiently
 detested!

† Luke i. 78.

genuity to his rational Creatures. As I read their Works, and am charmed with their Beauties, I would frequently reflect—" If the
 " Essays of a finite Mind, and the Compo-
 " sitions of a mortal Pen, yield such *high Sa-*
 " *tisfaction*; what exquisite, what unknown
 " Delight must arise, from an uninterrupted
 " Communion with infinite Wisdom? To stand
 " —not at the Feet of *Homer*, and attend the
 " Flights of his elevated Imagination—not in
 " the Presence of *Socrates*, and hear the Dic-
 " tates of his sagacious Soul—but, to stand
 " in the Courts of the LORD, and before the
 " Throne of the LAMB. There to contem-
 " plate, without any interposing Veil, the
 " Counsels of his unerring Providence; to
 " have the Mysteries of his redeeming Love,
 " laid fully open to our View; and receive
 " the brightest Manifestations of all his ami-
 " able, his adorable, his unspeakable Attri-
 " butes!"

Ther. These are Advantages, truly desirable, and equally obvious. Methinks, it *surprises* me, that I should never so much as propose them; and *grieves* me, that I should so long be deprived of them. A View to such very superior Improvements will, I hope, render my future Intercourse with those favourite Authors, still more agreeable, and abundantly more beneficial.

But

But let me ask, what Passage was engaging your Attention, this Afternoon?

Asp. The great Orator's Treatise, concerning the *Nature of the* DIVINE BEING*. That Part especially, which proves his Existence and Perfections, from the Formation of the *human Body*.

Ther. And don't You perceive, that He is almost as deficient in the Knowledge of his Subject; as he is mistaken in his Ideas of the supreme Cause?—The exquisite Contrivance and inimitable Workmanship of the human Frame, were, in those early Ages, but dimly discerned. It was the *Infancy* of Anatomy: when the very Professors had scarcely the Qualifications of a modern Graduate. Many of the received Notions, were childish; almost all of them, superficial.

Asp. Will my *Theron* then entertain me, with a more accurate Description of this wonderful Structure?

Ther. How could You take occasion, *Aspasio*, from the Hint I dropped, to conceive any such Expectation? It is one Thing to *discover*, another to *correct*, what is amiss. Many Spectators can point out an accidental Defect in some celebrated Statue, or a small Indelicacy in some valuable Piece of Painting; who are absolutely

* *De Natura Deorum.*

absolutely incapable of retouching the One, or supplying the Other.

Afp. Since We are fallen upon this Point, You must give me leave to renew and urge my Request. I shall be extremely glad to hear your Remarks upon the Subject. Especially, as You have made this Branch of Science, a Part of your Amusement; and not without the Advantage of *anatomical* Dissections. Whereas, I have very seldom applied my Thoughts to the former, and never had an Opportunity of being present at the latter.

Let me also observe, that our very Situation favours, or rather suggests such a Topic of Conversation. All the fine Prospects of the Country are excluded. We have scarce any Thing left, but *Ourselves*, to contemplate. And shall this be the only Theme We neglect?

Ther. It is somewhat preposterous, I must confess, to pry into the Archives of Colleges; to ransack the Cabinets of the *Virtuosi*; to carry our Search through the whole Compass of external Nature; and, at the same Time, overlook the far more surprising Curiosities, which abound in the Composition of our own Bodies.

Since you insist upon it, my Observations, crude and extemporaneous as they are, shall submit themselves to your Judgment. Provided,

vided, You will be content to receive, only a few of the *Outlines*, and nothing like a *finished Draught*.

App. Let me just hint, that the more *circumstantial* your Account is, so much the more welcome will it be to your Friend, and so much the more honourable to our common CREATOR. For, I really think, that *Galen's* Declaration upon this Head is perfectly just: which I have read in my favourite Commentator *Beno*, and which speaks to the following Effect *.—"Such Treatises, as display the
"Excellencies of the great CREATOR, com-
"pose one of the noblest and most *acceptable*
"Hymns. To acquaint Ourselves with his
"sublime Perfections; and point out to Others
"his infinite Power, his unerring Wisdom,
"and his boundless Benignity; this is a more
"*substantial* Act of Devotion, than to slay
"Heatombs of Victims at his Altar, or kindle
"Mountains of Spices into Incense." *Theron*,
after pausing a few Minutes, thus resumed the Discourse.

Ther. When some Master-builder undertakes to erect a magnificent Edifice, He begins with the less decorated, but more solid Parts. Those, which are to *support*, or those which are to *contain* the rest. This Order, if You please, We

* Vid. *Bex.* Annot. ad *Rom.* i. 20.

We will follow, in considering "the earthly
"House of our Tabernacle*."

First, You have a System of *Bones*; cast into a Variety of Moulds; enlarged or contracted into a Variety of Sizes. All *strong*, that they may commodiously bear up the fleshy Machine; yet *light*, that they may not depress the Animal with an encumbering Load.—*Bored* with an internal Cavity, to contain the moistening Marrow; and *perforated* with exceedingly fine Ducts, to admit the nourishing Vessels.—Insensible themselves, they are *covered* with a Membrane † of exquisite Sensibility. Which warns them of the Approach, and secures them from the Annoyance, of any injurious Friction: and, at the same time, preserves the muscular Parts, from being fretted in their Action, by the hard and rough Substance of the Bones.—Their *Figures* are always most precisely fitted to their Uses. They are generally larger at the Extremities, than in

* 2 Cor. v. 1. St. Paul very pertinently compares the bodily Structure to a *House*. And adds, in that Strain of godly Edifying, which runs through all his Writings, our *earthly and tent-like Habitation*, *οικητιον & σκηνη*. Referring to its *mean Original*, as it was formed out of the Dust; and to its *short Continuance*, as it must soon return to Dust again. Being, though commodious as a House, yet transitory as a Tent: not like the *everlasting Mountains*, which stand fixed and rooted to the Center; but like those *portable Tenements*, which are set up in the Evening, taken down in the Morning, and then their Place is known no more.

† The *Periostrum*.

in the Middle; that they may be joined more firmly, and not so easily dislocated.—The Manner of their *Articulation* is truly admirable*, and remarkably various: yet never varied, without demonstrating some wise Design, and answering some valuable End. Frequently, when two are united, the one is nicely rounded, and capped with a smooth Substance; the other is scooped into a Hollow of the same Dimensions, to receive the polished Knob; and both are lubricated with an unctuous Fluid, to yield the readiest Rotation in the Socket.

The *Feet* compose the firmest and neatest Pedestal: infinitely beyond all that Statuary or Architecture can accomplish; capable of altering its Form, and extending its Size, as different Circumstances require. Besides performing the Office of a Pedestal, they contain a Set of the nicest Springs; which help to place the Body in a Variety of graceful Attitudes, and qualify it for a Multiplicity of advantageous Motions.—The undermost Part of the Heel, and the Extremity of the Sole, are shod with a tough, insensible, sinewy Substance. This We may call, a Kind of *natural Sandal*. It never wears out; never wants Repair; and always prevents that undue Compression

* *Mirabiles Commissuras habent.*

Cicer.

pression of the Vessels, which the Weight of the Body, in walking or standing, might otherwise occasion.—The *Legs* and *Thighs*, are like substantial and stately Columns *; articulated in such a Manner, that they administer most commodiously to the Act of Walking, yet obstruct not the easy Posture of Sitting. The Legs swell out, towards the Top, with a genteel Projection; and are wrought off, towards the Bottom, with neat Diminutions. Which Variation lessens their Bulk, at the same Time that it increases their Beauty.

The *Ribs*, turned into a regular Arch, are gently moveable, for the Act of Respiration. They form a secure Lodgment for the Lungs and the Heart: which, being some of the most distinguished and important Organs of Life,

* Styled therefore by the sacred Philosopher, *The strong Men*, Eccles. xii. 3.—And compared, by the same beautiful Writer, to *Pillars of Marble*. Cantic. v. 15. As these are the strongest Parts of the Body, and the Support of all the other, hence, I presume, arose that proverbial Expression, which occurs in the History of *Sampson*, *Te by pte Judg.* xv. 8. Rendered by the *Septuagint*, *ωναν εν μηρι*; by our *English Translators*, *Hip and Thigh*. I believe, the Word *pte* signifies Here, as in many other Places, what the *Latins* call *Armus*. And that the Image is taken from some robust and fierce Animal, whose *Shoulders* before, and whose *Thighs* behind, are broken in Pieces. Then what Mischief can He do? What Resistance can He make? He is utterly disabled. So that the Expression seems to denote, (and might perhaps, without Violence to the Original, be translated) *A total Overthrow*.

Life, have their Residence fortified by this strong semicircular Rampart*.—The *Backbone* is intended, not only to strengthen the Body, and sustain its most capacious Store-Rooms; but also to bring down that Communication of the Brain, which is usually termed the *spinal Marrow*. As an open Channel, it conveys, as a well-closed Case, it guards this vital Silver†; and, by several commodious Outlets, transmits the animating Treasure into all the inferior Parts. Had it only been large, strait, and hollow, it might have served these several Purposes. But then the Loins must have been inflexible, and every Man impaled (not by the Executioner, but by Nature) on a Stake co-eval with his Existence. To avoid which, it consists of very short Bones, closely knit together by intervening Cartilages. This Peculiarity of Structure prevents Dislocation; and gives the main Pillar of our Frame the *Pliancy* of an *Ofer*, even while it retains the *Firmness* of an *Oak*.—By this means, it is a Kind of continued Joint; capable of various Inflections, without bruising the soft medullary Substance, that fills its Cavity;

* *Thou hast fenced me, secured my inward and vital Parts, with Bones and Sinews, Job x. 11.*—*Crates Pectoris*, is *Virgil's* Expression.

† This is supposed to be the Part, which *Solomon* describes by *The silver Cord*: and is indeed like a Cord, on Account of its *Shape*; like Silver, on Account of its *Colour*, *Ecclef. xii. 6.*

Cavity; without intercepting the nervous Fluid, which is to be detached from this grand Reservoir; or diminishing that Strength, which is necessary to support all the upper Stories.—A Formation so very peculiar in any other of the Solids, must have been attended with great Inconveniencies. Here, it is unspeakably serviceable. Is, both for Workmanship and Situation, a Master-piece of creating Skill, never enough to be admired.

The *Arms*, pendent on either Side, are exactly proportioned to each other; that the Equilibrium of the Structure may not be disconcerted. These, being the Guards that defend *, and the Ministers that serve the whole Body, are fitted for the most *diversified* and *extensive* Operations. Firm with Bone, yet not weighty with Flesh; and capable of performing, with singular Expedition and Ease, all Manner of useful Motions. They bend inwards, and turn outwards; they rise upwards, and stoop downwards; they wheel about, and throw themselves into whatever Direction We please.—To these are annexed the *Hands*; and all terminated by the *Fingers*. Which are, not like the Arms, of the same Length, and of an equal Bigness; but in both Respects different. Which gives them a more graceful

* Called, in Solomon's figurative but elegant Sketch of Anatomy, *The Keepers of the House*, Ecclef. xii. 3.

graceful Appearance, and a much greater Degree of Usefulness. Were they all Flesh, they would be *comparatively* impotent: were they one intire Bone, they would be *utterly* inflexible. But consisting of various little Bones, and a Multitude of Muscles, what Shape can they not assume? What Service can they not perform?—Being placed at the End of the Arm, the Sphere of their Action is exceedingly enlarged. This advantageous Situation realizes the Fable of *Briareus*; and renders a Pair of Hands, as serviceable as an Hundred. —The Extremities of the Fingers, are an Assemblage of fine tendinous Fibres, most acutely sensible *. Which, notwithstanding the Delicacy of their Texture, are destined to almost incessant Employ, and frequently exercised among rugged Objects. For this Reason, they are overlaid with the *Nails*, a Sort of horny Expansion: which, like a Ferule, hinders the Flesh from being ungracefully flattened;

* So very acute is the Sensibility of these Parts, that, I am informed, it furnishes the *Tribunal of Inquisition*, with one of the most refined Expedients in the *Art of Torture*. A strong Quill, sharpened by the Pen-knife, and dipped in some inflammatory Liquor, is thrust deep between the Nail and the Finger. When the Quill has cut its Way through the shivering Nerves; and stands planted, like a Dagger, amidst the gushing Blood; some barbarous Hand sets Fire to the Extremity. The keen Point, the slow Flame, and both in the Seat of the most lively Sensation, put the miserable Sufferer to the *most excruciating Pain*.

flattened; and, like a Sheath *, preserves the tender Parts from injurious Impressions.

In the Ministry of the Hands, and Activity of the Fingers, We possess a Case of the *finest Instruments*, or a Collection of the *noblest Utensils*. Qualifying Us for the Execution of every Work, which the projecting Genius can devise, or the lavish Fancy crave.—To these We are obliged for the beautiful Statues, which have often entertained our Eyes, in yonder solitary Walks; and even for that melodious Trumpet, which now addresses our Ears, from the Summer-house on the Fish-pond.—These raise the lofty Column, and turn the spacious Arch. These swell the majestic Dome, and adjust the commodious Apartment. Architecture, with all her striking Beauties, and all her rich Benefits, are the Creation of the human Hand.—Yielding to the Strength of the Hand, the tallest Firs fall to the Ground, and the largest Oaks descend from the Mountains. Fashioned by the Dexterity of the Hand, they accommodate the Sailor with a *floating Warehouse*; and circulate, from *Britain to Japan*, the Productions of Nature, and the Improvements of Art.—Obedient to the human Hand, Metals ascend from their subterranean Beds; and compose the most substantial Parts of that *curious Machine* †, which transmits far and near,

* *Digitis Munimina.* † The Printing-Press.

DIALOGUE XII. 179

near, to the Monarch's Palace and to the Peasant's Hut, such Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, as *the Gold and Crystal cannot equal* *.

Among the *Egyptians*, the Hand was the Symbol of Strength: among the *Romans*, it was an Emblem of Fidelity: and I think, it may, among all Nations, be looked upon as the Ensign of *Authority*. It is the original and the universal Sceptre; that which not only represents, but ascertains our Dominion, over all the Elements, and over every Creature.—Though Providence has not given Us the Strength of the Horse, the Swiftneſs of the Greyhound, or the ſagacious Scent of the Spaniel; yet, directed by the Underſtanding, and enabled by the Hand, We can ſubject them to our Will; turn them to our Advantage; and, in this Senſe, make them all *our own*.—Theſe Hands (ſurpriſing to relate!) theſe *ſhort* Hands have found out a Way, whereby they can dive to the Bottom of the Ocean; can penetrate the Bowels of the Earth; and reach from Shore to Shore. Theſe *feeble* Hands can manage the Wings of the Wind; can arm themſelves with the Rage of the Fire; and preſs into their Service the forcible Impetuofity of the Waters.—How eminent is the Dignity! How extenſive the Agency of

M 2 the

* Job xxviii.

the Hand! It would require more Eloquence, than your Orator possessed, to display the former; and more Pages, than your Book contains, to describe the latter.—How greatly are We indebted to our indulgent CREATOR, for accommodating Us with this noble, this distinguishing, this invaluable Member!

Above all, is the *Head*; a majestic Dome, designed for the Residence of the Brain. It is framed in exact Conformity to this important Purpose; ample to receive it; strong, to uphold it; and firm, to defend it. As it resembles the *General's* Tent in an Army, or the *Monarch's* Palace in a City; it has a Communication established with all, even the most inferior and remote, Parts of the System. Has Outlets and Avenues, for the ready Dispatch of Couriers to all Quarters; and for the Reception of speedy Intelligence, on every interesting Occasion. It is furnished with Lodgments, wherein to post Centinels of various Characters, and appointed for various Offices.—To expedite their Operations; whether they are employed in reconnoitring what passes *without*, or examining what claims Admittance *within*; the whole turns upon a curious Pivot, most nicely contrived, to afford the largest and freest Circumvolutions.

This stately Capital, is screened from Heat; defended from Cold; and at the same time
very

very much beautified, by a copious Growth of Hair. Which flows down from the parted Forelock in decent Curls; and hangs, mantling on the Cheeks, clustering on the Shoulders. — A Decoration *, incomparably more *delicate*, than any or all the Orders of Architecture can supply; and so perfectly *light*, as no Way to incumber or incommode the Wearer.

While many Animals creep on the Ground: while all of them are prone in their Posture, or their Aspect: the Attitude of Man is *erect*. — Which is by far the most *graceful*; has an Air of Dignity, and bespeaks Superiority. — It is by far the most *commodious*; fits Us for the Prosecution of every grand Scheme, and facilitates the Success of all our extensive Designs. — It is likewise attended with the greatest *Safety*; being, if not less than any other Position exposed to Dangers, yet more happily contrived to repel or avoid them.

Asp. May it not likewise be intended, to remind Us of our noble Original, and our sublime End? Our *Original*, which was the Breath of

* *Abalom's* Hair was reckoned a distinguishing Part of his Beauty, 2 *Sam.* xiv. 26. — The Amiability of the Church, in the exemplary Conversation of true Believers, is displayed by the same Ornament. *Cant.* iv. 1. — And *Homer*, in his so much admired Representation of *Jupiter*, makes the Motion of his Ambrosial Locks a principal Embellishment of the Picture;

Ἀμφοριαὶ δ' ἀπὸ χαιλῶν ἐρεπταυλὸν ἀνὰ ἄνδρα.

of the ALMIGHTY, and the Spirit of the MOST HIGH. Our *End*, which is, not the Soil We tread on, or any of its low Productions, but the Heaven of Heavens, and the *Things that are above*.

But not to divert from our Subject ; which, in my Friend's Manner of handling it, is as entertaining, as it is instructive.—The Bones (to carry on your own Allusion) are only the *Rafters*, the *Beams*, the *Shell* of the living Edifice. You have laid the Floors, have made the proper Divisions, and left the necessary Apertures. But, in every finished House, the Roof is covered, and the Rooms are wainscoted. The Sashes are hung, and the Doors turn upon their Hinges. The Grates are fixed, and the Stairs either wind or fly. *Within*, the Lodgings are furnished ; *without*, the Front is ornamented. All is rendered commodious for domestic Use, and graceful to the external View.

Ther. This likewise is executed by the great, the DIVINE ARTIFICER.—Here are *Ligaments* ; a tough and strong Arrangement of Fibres ; to unite the several Limbs ; and render, what would otherwise be a disjointed unwieldy Jumble, a well-compact and self-manageable System.—*Membranes* ; or thin and flexile Tunicles ; appointed to inwrap the fleshy Parts ;

Parts; to form a Connection between some, and make a Separation between others *.

Arteries, the grand Rivers of our little World †, or the noble Aqueducts of the organized Metropolis. Some of which ascend to the Head: others spread themselves over the Shoulders: some extend to the Arms: some descend to the Feet: and striking out, as they go, into numberless smaller Canals, visit the Streets, the Alleys, and every *individual* Apartment of the vital City.—These, being wide at their Origin, and lessening as they branch themselves, check the rapid Impetus of the Blood. To sustain this Shock, they are endued with uncommon Strength: by performing this Service, they oblige the Crimson Current to pass into the *narrowest Defiles*, and distribute itself into all Quarters.—The Blood, thrown from the Heart, dilates the Arteries, and their own elastic Force contracts them. By which means, they *vibrate*, in proper Places, very perceivably against the Finger; bring Advices of the utmost Importance to the Physician; and very much assist Him, both in discovering the Nature of Diseases, and prescribing

* The Intestines are *fastened* to each other by the *Mesentery*. The Breast is *divided* into two Cavities by the *Mediastinum*. Both which are reckoned among the Membranes.

† A human Body was called by the Antients, The *Microcosm*; that is, a little World, or the World in Miniature.

ing for their respective Cures.—The larger Arteries, where-ever the Body is formed for Incurvation, are situate on the *bending* Side; left, being stretched to an improper Length by the Inflection, their Dimensions should be lessened, and the circulating Fluid retarded.—They are not, like several of the considerable Veins, laid so near the Surface, as to be protrusive of the Skin; but are deposited to a *proper Depth* in the Flesh. This Situation renders them more secure from external Injuries. It conceals likewise those Starts and Refilitions of the Pulse, which, if apparent, would discompose the most sedate, and disfigure the most comely Countenance.—Could We cast our Eye upon the River, that runs through the neighbouring Meadow, We might observe several Mills intersecting the Stream. The Waters at those Places, if not intirely stopped, drain away very slowly. In consequence of this Obstruction, the lower Channels would be sunk dry, and the upper Ones swelled into a Flood. To obviate both these Inconveniencies, *Low-shots* are provided: which, carrying off the Surcharge, prevent a Glut above, and supply the Banks below. In those Parts of the Body, which are most liable to Pressure, much the same Expedient takes place. The Arteries *inosculate*; or, breaking into a new Track, they fetch a little *Circuit*, in order

der to return and communicate again with the main Road. So that, if any Obstacle blocks up or straitens the direct Passage; the Current, by diverting to this new Channel, eludes the Impediment; maintains an uninterrupted Flow; and soon regains its wonted Course.

Veins are appointed to receive the Blood from the Arteries, and reconvey it to the Heart.— Small at their Rise, and enlarging as they advance, they are void of any Pulsation. In these, the Pressure of the circulating Fluid, is not near so forcible as in the arterial Tubes; for which Reason, their Texture is considerably slighter. Such an exact *Oeconomist* is Nature, even amidst all her *Liberality* *!—In many of these Canals, the Current, though widening continually, and acquiring a proportionable Increase of Gravity, is obliged to push its Way against the Perpendicular. By which Circumstance, it is exposed to the Hazard of falling back, and overloading the Vessels; if not of suppressing the animal Motion. For a Security against this Danger, *Valves* are interposed at proper Distances. Which are no Hindrance to the regular Passage, but prevent the Reflux; sustain the augmented Weight;

* A parallel Instance of Frugality is observable in the Arteries. Whose Coats are spun *thinner*, as the Diameter of the Vessels becomes *smaller*, and the Pressure of the Blood *weaker*.

Weight ; and facilitate a Progress to the grand Receptacle. This auxiliary Contrivance comes in, where the Blood is constrained to climb ; but is dismissed where the steep Ascent ceases, and such a Precaution would be needless.

Here are *Glands*, whose Office it is, to filtrate the passing Fluid. Each of these Glands is an Assemblage of Vessels, complicated and interwolved, with seeming Confusion, but with perfect Regularity. As some kind of Sieves transmit the Dust, and retain the Corn ; others bolt out the Meal, and hold back the Bran ; so, some of these glandulous Strainers draw off the finest, others the grossest Parts of the Blood. Some, like the Distiller's Alembic, *sublimate** ; others, like the common Sewers, *defacate*†. Each forms a Secretion, far more curious than the most admired Operations of Chemistry ; yet all, necessary for the Support of Life, or conducive to the Comfort of the Animal.—*Muscles*, wove in Nature's nicest Loom ; composed of the slenderest Fibres, yet endued with incredible Strength ; fashioned
after

* The glandulous Substance of the *Brain* ; which secretes the animal Spirits.

† The *Liver* and *Kidneys*. The former of which separates the *Gall* ; the latter drains off a *Fluid*, which, being sufficiently known, need not be named. I could wish, it had not been so explicitly and coarsely mentioned, in our Translation of the best of Books. But that We had rendered the Original, in 1 *Kings* xiv. 10. *Every Male* ; in *Isai.* xxxvi. 12. *Eat and drink their own Excrements*.

after a Variety of Patterns, but all in the highest Taste for Elegance, Conveniency, and Usefulness.—These, with their *Tendons* annexed, constitute the Instruments of Motion. The former, contracting their Substance, operate somewhat like the Pulley in Mechanics. The latter, resembling the Cord, are fastened to a Bone, or some Partition of Flesh; and, following the muscular Contraction, actuate the Part into which they are inserted. This, and all their Functions they execute, not like a sluggish Beast of Burden, but quick as the Lightning.—*Nerves*, surprisngly minute Tubes; derived from the Brain, and permeated by an exquisitely subtle Fluid. Which, gliding into the Muscles, sets them on work; diffuses the Power of Sensation through the Body; or, returning upon any Impression from without, gives all needful Intelligence to the Soul.—*Vesicles*, distended with an unctuous Matter; in some Places, compose a soft Cushion * for Nature; in other Places, they fill up her Vacuities, and smooth the Inequalities of the Flesh. *Inwardly*, they supple the several

* The *Calf* of the *Leg*, for Instance. Whose large Collection of Muscles, intermingled with Fat, is of singular Service to those important Bones. It flanks and fortifies them, like a *strong Bastion*. It supports and cherishes them, like a *soft Pillow*. And what is no less pleasing to observe, it accommodates and defends them on that very Side, where they most frequently rest their Weight, and where they are least capable of being guarded by the Eye.

ral Movements of the active Machine. *Outwardly*, they render its Appearance plump, well proportioned, and graceful.

The *Skin*, like a curious Surtout*, exactly fitted, is superinduced over the whole. Formed of the most delicate Net-work; whose Meshes† are minute, and whose Threads‡ are multiplied, even to a Prodigy.—The Meshes so minute, that nothing passes them, which is discernable by the Eye; though they discharge, every Moment, Myriads and Myriads of superfluous

* *Thou hast clothed me with Skin and Flesh*, Job x. 11.—The Word *Surtout* is used according to the *French Etymology*; signifies a Garment, coming over the whole Body; and is most beautifully expressed by our LORD's ἀμφιέννυσσι. Matt. vi. 30.

† The Pores of the Cuticula.

‡ The nervous Fibres, and other Vessels of the Cutis.—Nature is somewhat like Solomon's virtuous Woman. *Who is not afraid of the Snow for her Household, because her Household are clothed in Scarlet*: or, as it may be rendered, are clothed with Pairs; have two Coats a-piece. Prov. xxxi. 21. (See Gen. xi. 19, 20. where the Word כַּיִשׁ is thus translated.)—The Body also is accommodated with a double Covering. The outermost is that soft whitish Tegument, which rises in the Pustule of a Blister. The innermost is that reddish and exquisitely tender Part, which appears when the Blister is broke, and the dead Skin taken off.—The first is void of Sense, and intended to screen the second, not only from the Stroke of Injuries, but even from the Impressions of the Air: which, mild as it may feel to the sheathed, would be too rough and sharp for the naked Nerves.

There seems to be an Allusion to this Particular, in that remarkable Expression, *Skin for Skin*, עֹרַ בְּעֹרַ Job ii. 4. *Skin even unto Skin*; the very inmost Skin, which cannot be taken away, without the greatest Loss, and severest Pain. Yet, even this Loss a Man would suffer, this Pain He would endure, in order to preserve precious Life.

perfluous Encumbrances from the Body. The Steam, arising from the warm Business transacted within, is carried off by these real, though imperceptible Funnel^s *. Which constitutes, what We usually call, *insensible Perspiration*.—The Threads so *multiplied*, that neither the Point of the smallest Needle, nor the incomparably nicer Spear of a Gnat, nor even the invisible Lancet of a Flea, can pierce any single Part, without causing an uneasy Sensation and a Suffusion of Blood: consequently, without wounding, even by so small a Puncture, both a Nerve and a Vein †.

The Veins, either pervading, or lying parallel with, this fine transparent Coat, *beautify* the human Structure; those Parts especially, which are most conspicuous, and intended for public View. The pliant Wrist, and the taper Arm, they variegate with an Inlay of living

* These are somewhere prettily styled, *cutaneous Chimneys*; and are indeed inexpressibly fine, if, as Mr. *Leuwenhoeck* affirms, a single Grain of Sand will cover no less than 125,000.

† A *Blood-Vessel* at least. Compared with these Vessels, the fine *filmy Threads*, which, on some bright and autumnal Morning, float in the Air, or hang on the Stubble, must be large as a Bell-rope, or bulky as a Cable.—Such Tubes, One would think, should *burst* at every Breath We draw, or even *break* with their own Fineness. Yet, they are the Conduit-Pipes, which convey the vital Fluid from and to the grand Reservoir. And so exquisite, so wonderful, is their Texture, that they will out-last the Strength of Lead, or the Heart of Oak: *these* wearing away, *those* growing stronger, by Use.

ing Sapphire. They spread Vermilion over the Lips *, and plant Roses in the Cheeks. While the Eye, tinged with glossy Jet, or sparkling with the Blue of Heaven, is fixed in an Orb of polished Crystal. Infomuch that the earthly Tabernacle exhibits the nicest Proportions, and richest Graces. Such *nice Proportions*, as afford the most correct Model for Statuary: such *rich Graces*, as the Canvass never bore, as Painting imitates in vain.

Asp. How just in itself, and how pertinent to our Purpose, is that well-known Acknowledgment of the sacred and royal Anatomist; “*I am curiously wrought †!* There is a Variety, an Elegance, and a Delicacy, in the Texture of my Body; in the Formation and Arrangement of these Bones and Muscles, these Veins and Arteries;—resembling, shall I say?—rather, infinitely surpassing the most costly and admired Pieces of Embroidery.”

It is one of the finest Similitudes, which the whole Circle of polite Arts could afford. Yet every Comparison, fetched from the Performances

* *Thy Lips are like a Thread of Scarlet.* Cant. iv. 3. Like a Thread, for their delicate Shape; like a Thread of Scarlet, for their glowing Colour.

† The Original רִכְכֵּתִי signifies *finely wrought, or elegantly flourished with a Needle*.—The Translation adopted by our Liturgy is, in this Place, flat and inexpressive. The *English* Word *fashioned*, has just the same Inferiority to the beautiful *Hebrew* Phrase; as the *Badge*, tacked upon some poor Pensioner's Coat, has to the *Star* embroidered on a Nobleman's Breast. *Psal.* cxxxix. *ver.* 14.

DIALOGUE XII. 191

formances of Mankind, must necessarily debase the noble Subject. All the Enrichments, that the Needle can give, or the most *splendid Silks* receive, are rude, are coarse, are mere Sack-cloth, when set in Opposition to the exquisite Fineness of the fleshly Web. As indeed all the celebrated *Palaces, Amphitheatres, Temples*, that ever adorned the most magnificent Cities in the World, are but a Heap of Confusion, if compared with the Symmetry and Beauty of the bodily Fabric.—And, what is beyond Measure marvelous, all these Wonders of Mechanism and Decoration arose—not from the purer Elements—not from the more refined Parts of the Creation—but from the *Dust* of the Ground. How easily, *Theron*, can that stupendous ARTIFICER *renew* our Hearts, and transform our Souls into his own Image; who could raise such delicate and stately Edifices, from Particles—despicable Particles of the trodden Soil!

I could not forbear interposing this Remark: Because, it tends to manifest our CREATOR's Glory, to encourage our Hopes, and strengthen our Faith. Otherwise, I should be angry with myself, for interrupting your Discourse.—Pray, go on with your Description of the animal Oeconomy. Only let me observe, That such a Course of incessant Action, must *exhaust* the Fluids; must *waste* the Solids; and, unless

unless both are supplied with proper Recruits, must gradually weaken, and at length totally destroy, the Machine.

Ther. For this Reason, it is furnished with the Organs, and endued with the Powers of *Nutrition*.—*Teeth*; the foremost, thin and sharp; fitted to bite asunder the Food, or cut * off such a Portion, as the Mouth can conveniently manage. The hindmost, broad and strong; indented, like the Surface of a Mill-stone †, with small Cavities, and jagged with little Asperities. Which qualify them to grind in pieces, whatever is transmitted to their Operation.—Were the Teeth, like our other Bones, covered with the usual Membrane, the Act of *Chewing* would always occasion great Uneasiness; and, when any hard Substance is eaten, might even lacerate the tender Tegument. Were they left without any Sort of Covering; they would suffer from the Inclemencies of the Air, and be liable to the Penetration of Liquors. In which Case, they must

* Called therefore, *Incisivi*.

† Styled accordingly, *Molars*.—We find neither of these Kinds in the new-born Babe. As Milk is, for a considerable Time, its appointed Food, Teeth would be of no Service to the Infant itself. As it is to press the tender Nipple for this milky Sustenance, Teeth would be painful and prejudicial to the Nurse. Therefore Nature has *postponed* the Formation of these fine Implements, till they become both necessary and beneficial.

must soon become soft and unfit for Service, or be corrupted and intirely perish. To guard against these Disadvantages, they are curiously glazed, or overlaid with a neat *Enamel*; as white as Ivory, and harder than the Bone itself. Which renders them an Ornament to the Mouth*; secures them from various Injuries; and exempts them from Pain in the Office of Mastication.

As the Rims and Cushions of a Billiard-Table, keep the Ball from flying off; and send it back into the green Area, for repeated Essays of Skill; so the *Lips* prevent the Food from slipping out of the Mouth; and, assisted by the Tongue, return it to the renewed Attrition of the Grinders.—While the Lips, in Concert with the Cheeks, are employed in this Work, their Motion compresses the circumjacent Glands; and, from innumerable little Orifices, a thin *pellucid Liquor* exsudes. Which moistens the attenuated Food, and prepares it

* This ornamental Furniture of the Mouth, is, in the grand oriental Manner, described by Solomon. *Thy Teeth are like a Flock of Sheep, that are even shorn, which come up from the Washing*, Cant. iv. 2. Growing, not single, like the Nose; not in Pairs, like the Eyes; but in Rows considerably numerous, *like a Flock*.—None rising higher than the other; none standing prominent beyond another; but all set as true, as if they were ranged by the Compass; and making as regular an Appearance, as the Flocks *that are even shorn*.—They are clean also as the Fleeces that have no Spot, and white as the Colour of the purest Wool, like the Flocks *just come up from the Washing*.

it for more easy Digestion.—When the Mouth remains inactive, these Fountains of Spittle are, in a manner, closed. But, when it is exercised, either in speaking or eating, their Moisture then being peculiarly necessary, they never fail to give out a sufficient Quantity.

When the Soldier charges his Carbine, the Cartridge could not make its way to the Bottom, without the Protrusion of the Rammer*. Neither would the Food, which We receive at the Mouth, descend, by the Force of its own Weight, through a narrow and clammy Channel, into the Stomach. To effectuate therefore, and expedite its Passage, Muscles, both

* This, and the other Similitudes, are undoubtedly *too mean* for the noble Occasion. Neither do they, in every Circumstance, quadrate with the Functions described. The Motion of the Muscles, which minister to the Act of Deglutition, is different from the perpendicular Protrusion of the Rammer. And it is mentioned, only to demonstrate the Necessity of *some propelling* Force, in order to convey the Aliment into the proper Receptacle.

When We descant upon a Subject, of such extensive Contrivance, and such finished Perfection, as the human Structure; it is scarce possible to find Similitudes, that will correspond in *all* Particulars, or that can rise to the *Dignity* of the Original. Yet if they tend, in any tolerable Degree, to explain its Formation, to display its Uses, and render its wonderful Oeconomy somewhat more intelligible, perhaps they may be allowed to take place.

I hope, it will be remembered, that *Theron* speaks, not as an Adept in the Science, but as One whose highest Pretensions are, to admire the Work, and adore the ARTIFICER. Which Acknowledgment may intitle Him to some candid Indulgence, in case He should offend against the *precise anatomical* Exactness, either of Sentiment, or Expression.

both *strait* and *circular*, are provided. The former, enlarge the Cavity of the Throat, and afford a more easy Admittance; the latter, closing behind the descending Aliment, press it downwards, and finish the Deglutition.— Before the Food enters the Gullet, it must of Necessity pass over the Orifice of the *Wind-pipe*; consequently, must be in very imminent Danger of falling upon the Lungs. Which would, if not intirely obstruct the Breath, yet occasion violent Coughing*, and great Inconveniencies. To obviate this Evil, the all-foreseeing CONTRIVER has placed a *moveable Lid*, or hung a *cartilaginous Draw-bridge*†. Which, when any the smallest Particle of Food advances to enter the Stomach, is pulled down and shut close; but, the very Moment the Morfel is swallowed, is let loose and stands open. By this two-fold Artifice, the important Passage is always barred and made sure, against any noxious Approaches; yet, always left free for the necessary Accession of Air, and commodious for the Purposes of Respiration.

When the Malster prepares his Grain for the Transmutations of the Brew-house; He suffers

* This is what We experience, when, in eating or drinking, any Thing goes (as is commonly, and not improperly said) *the wrong Way*.

† Called the *Epiglottis*.

suffers it to lie, several Hours, steeping in the Cistern; before it is fit, to be spread upon the Floor, or dried on the Kiln. The Meat and Drink likewise must remain, a considerable Time, in the Stomach; before they are of a *proper Consistence* and Temperature, either for the tender Coats, or the delicate Operation of the Bowels. For which Purpose, that great Receiver is made—strong to bear—capacious to hold—and so curiously contrived, as to lay a *temporary Embargo* * upon its Contents. Here, they are lodged in the very Center of Warmth, and concocted by the most kindly Combination of Heat and Humidity. Here, they are saturated with other fermenting or diluting Juices; and are kneaded, as it were, by the Motion of the Stomach, and Compression of the neighbouring Parts. So that every the minutest Fragment is separated; the Whole is reduced to a *Tenuity*, abundantly finer than the exactest Grinding could effect; and all is worked up into the smoothest, most *nicely mixed* Pulp imaginable.—From hence it is dislodged, by a gently acting Force; and passes, by a gradual Transition, into the Cavity of the Intestines.

Near

* Which is quite *contrary* to the Oeconomy of the Gullet; though they are not only contiguous to each other, but a Continuation of the *same* Tube.

Near the Entrance, punctual as a Porter in his Lodge, waits the *Gall-bladder* *; ready to transfuse its acrimonious, but salutary Juices, on the advancing Aliment. Which *dissolve* its remaining Viscidities; *scour* the Passage of the Intestines; and keep all its fine Apertures clear. — This Bag, as the Stomach fills, is elevated by the Distention; as the Stomach empties, is proportionably depressed. The former Posture brings on a Discharge, the latter occasions a Suppression, of the *Bile*. It is furnished also with a Valve, of a very peculiar, but most convenient Form †; through which the detensive Liquid, cannot hastily pour, but must gently ooze.—Admirable Construction! Which, without any Care or Consciousness of ours, prohibits an *immoderate* Effusion, yet ascertains the *needful* Supply.

Sufficiently charged with this adventitious Fluid, the nutritive Mass pursues its Way through the *Intestines*. Whose wonderful Meanders, are incomparably more curious, than the Mazes of the *Dadalean* Labyrinth. They are actuated with a worm-like or undulatory Motion ‡; which protrudes the received Aliment, and

* The Gall-bladder is situate upon the lower Margin of the Liver; and to secrete the *billous* Juice, is supposed to be the principal Use of that largest of Glands.

† A spiral Form.

‡ Stiled *vermicular* or *peristaltic*.

and forces its fine milky Particles into the *Lacteal Vessels*. These are a Series of the most delicate *Strainers*; ranged, in countless Multitudes, all along the Sides of the winding Passage. Each so nicely framed, as to admit the nutrimental balmy Juices, and reject the gross excrementitious Dregs.—Had this alimentary Tube been *strait* or *short*, the Food might have gone through it, without resigning a sufficient Quantity of its nourishing Particles. Therefore, it is artfully convolved, and greatly extended; to afford Nature an Opportunity, of *sifting* more thoroughly whatever passes, and of detaining whatever may serve her Purposes.—Lest such Lengths of Entrails, should be intangled among themselves, or be cumbrous to the Wearer, they are packed into the neatest Folds, and lie within a narrow Compass. They are at least six Times longer *, than the Body that contains them. Yet are they *lodged*, not *crowded*; in a *Part*, not in the *whole* Region, of the lower Belly. And amidst this small Space, have sufficient Room to execute the nicest and most important Functions.—Though the alimentary Substance can never mistake its Way;

* According to this Calculation, they must measure, in a pretty tall Man, more than *thirty-six Feet*.—The Substance of the Bowels, though *thin* to a Delicacy, is *strong* to a Wonder. The Skin of an Ox-gut, I am told, will endure the Blows of the Gold-beater's Hammer, for many Months, nay for several Years.

Way ; yet it may, through some accidental Impediment, attempt to return backward. In this Case, a Valve intervenes ; and renders, what would be extremely pernicious, almost always impracticable.—As the Whole proceeds in this serpentine Course, it is perpetually sending off Detachments of *nutritious* Juices. In consequence of which, it would lose its soft Temperature ; might become rugged, and pain the tender Parts ; perhaps, be hindered from sliding on to its final Exit. To prevent such an Obstruction, Glands are posted in proper Places *, and discharge a *lubricating* Fluid ; which aids the Progress of the Mass, and renews the Secretion of the Chyle. Till all that remains of the One, is clean drawn off ; and the Other—But here You must excuse me ; and for my Neglect of farther Particularity, your Author shall make an Apology ; *Quemadmodum autem Reliquiæ Cibi depellantur, tum astringentibus se Intestinis, tum relaxantibus, haud*

* In the Bowels, that lie nearest the Stomach, these Glands are *smaller* or *fewer* : because, in those Parts, the Aliment is copiously furnished with Moisture. Whereas, in the Bowels, which are more remote from the Stomach, and receive the Food drained of a considerable Quantity of its Chyle, the lubricating Glands are either *multiplied* or *enlarged*. A most admirable Provision ! Apparently diversified, according to the several Changes of the Aliment ; yet exactly adapted to the Exigencies of the Animal.

haud sane difficile dictu est: sed tamen prætereundum est, ne quid habeat Injucunditatis Oratio.*

The Chyle, drawn off by all the secretory Orifices, is carried along Millions of the finest † Ducts, and lodged in several commodious Cells ‡. As a Traveler, by baiting upon the Road, and taking proper Refreshment, is better qualified to pursue his Journey: so the Chyle, diverting to those little Inns, is mixed with a thin; diluting Lymph, which renders it more apt to flow, and more fit for Use.—From hence it is conveyed to one common Receptacle ||; and mounting through a perpendicular Tube, instils itself into the left subclavian Vein. This perpendicular Tube, not having sufficient Force of its own, borrows Assistance from its Neighbour,

* Cicero *De Nat. Deor.*—As Theron avoids meddling with a Subject, that is become useless and putrescent, I think myself obliged to imitate his *Delicacy*. Only I would add one Remark in the Notes, and shall beg leave to express it in *Greek*. That if it should prove, in any Degree, disgusting; it may have, at least, the negative Merit, not to offend many Readers. *Επει δε τα ἀποχρηστικά δυσχερῆ, ἀνίσταται τις τῶν οὐκ ἐλάττω ἢ φούρου, καὶ ἀννέμειναι ἢ διυλίσαι προσβιάσας ἀπο τῶν ἀνδρῶν.* *Socrat. Memorab.*

† Fine indeed! Since their Orifices, through which they admit the Chyle, are not discoverable even by the very best Microscopes. To this prodigiously nice Construction it is owing, that nothing enters the Substance of the Blood, but what is smaller than the smallest Arteries in the System: and thereby fitted to pass through the finest capillary Vessels, without causing any Obstruction.

‡ The Glands of the Mesentery.

|| The *Receptaculum Chyli*; a Reservoir, placed near the left Kidney.

hour. It is laid contiguous to the great Artery; whose strong Pulsation drives on the Fluid, which might otherwise stagnate; enables it to overcome the steep Ascent, and unload its precious Treasure at the very Door of the Heart.

The *Blood*, through every Stage of its ample Circuit, having sustained great Expences; being laid under Contribution, by every Gland in the whole System; and having supplied Myriads of the capillary Vessels, with Matter for insensible Perspiration; must be very much impoverished. But is most opportunely recruited, by this Accession of Chyle. — Yet though *recruited*, it is not *refined*. In its present crude State, it is absolutely unqualified to perform the vital Tour, or carry on the animal Functions. Therefore, by a grand Apparatus of muscular Fibres, it is waisted into the *Lungs*; and pours a thousand, thousand Rills into either Lobe. — In the Cells, the spongy Cells of this *amazing Laboratory*, it imbibes the Influences of the external Air; its heterogeneous Parts are thoroughly incorporated; and its whole Substance is made cool, smooth, and florid. — Thus improved, thus exalted, it is transmitted to the left Ventricle of the HEART; a *strong, active, indefatigable* * Muscle;

* *Indefatigable* — This is a very *distinguishing*, and no less *amazing* Property of the Heart. The large Muscles of the Arm, or the much larger of the Thigh, are soon wearied.

Muscle ; placed in the very Center of the System. Impelled by this beating Engine, Part shoots upward ; and sweeps, with a bounding Impetus, into the Head. There, it impregnates the prolific Fields of the Brain ; and forms those *subtile spirituous Dews* *, which impart Sense to every Nerve, and communicate Motion to every Limb. Part flows downward ; rolls the reeking Current through all the lower Quarters ; and dispenses the nutritional Stores, even to the meanest Member, and the minutest Vessel.

Observe, how the stately *Thames*, and the rapid *Rhine*, refresh the Forests and the Groves ; water the Towns, that croud their Banks ; and make the Meadows they intersect, laugh and sing. So, only with an incomparable

A Day's Labour, or a Day's Journey, will exhaust their Strength. But the Muscle, which constitutes the Heart, toils through whole Weeks, whole Months, whole Years, and never becomes weary. Is equally a Stranger to *Intermission* and *Fatigue*.

* These are, what We call, *The animal Spirits* ; and it is generally supposed, that Sensation is caused, by the *undulatory Motion* of this nervous Fluid.—Though some imagine, it is performed by the *vibratory Motion* of the Nerves themselves.—Others think, that neither of these Opinions will comport, with the Texture of those fine Tubes, or with the Nature of the Fluid they contain.—It is, I believe, one of those *Mysteries* in the material World, which may reconcile *thinking* and *unprejudiced* Minds, to the Mysteries of the *Christian Revelation*. Why should any One wonder, to find some Doctrines in the *BIBLE*, that surpass the Reach of human Understanding ; when there are so many Operations in the Body, confessedly and absolutely inexplicable by the most acute Anatomist ?

richer Fluid; and with infinitely more numerous Streams, this human River laves the several Regions of the Body. Transfusing Vigour, and propagating Health, through the Whole.

But, how shall a Stream, divided into Myriads of Channels, and pervading innumerable Tracts, how shall this be brought back again to its Source? Should any Portion, like your *Lake-Waters* after a Land-Flood, deviate from their Course, or be unable to return—Putrefaction would take place—A Nuisance would arise—Death might ensue. Therefore, the all-wise CREATOR has connected the Extremity of the Arteries, with the Beginning of the Veins. So that the same Force, which darts the crimson Wave through the former, drives it through the latter. Thus it is reconducted, without the least Extravasation, to the great salient Cistern *. There played off afresh, it renews and perpetuates the vital Functions.

Where two opposite Currents would be in Danger of clashing, a fibrous Excrecence interposes;

* Solomon makes use of this Similitude—*Or ever the Pitcher be broken at the Fountain; or the Wheel broken at the Cistern.* The two *Ventricles* of the Heart, replenished with Blood, are fitly represented by a *Cistern*; and the *contractile* Force of their *Fibres*, acts like the *Water-wheel* in *Hydraulics*.—The *Pitcher*, which receives the Water at the Spring-head, and conveys it away for the Owner's Service, may probably signify the *Aorta*, and the *pulmonary Artery*; whose Functions correspond with the Uses of such a Vessel. *Ecclesl. xii. 6.*

terposes *; which, like a projecting Pier, breaks the Stroke of each, and throws both into their proper Receptacle. — Where the Wafture is to be *speedy*, the Channels either forbear to wind in their Course †, or to lessen in their Dimensions ‡. When the Progress is to be *retarded*, the Tubes are twined into various Convolutions ||, or their Diameter is contracted into a narrower Size. — Modeled by these judicious Rules; guarded by these wise Precautions; the living Flood never discontinues its interchangeable Tide: but, Night and Day, whether We sleep or wake, still perseveres to fall *briskly* through the Arteries, and return *softly* through the Veins.

Such astonishing Expedients are used, to elaborate the Chyle—to blend it with the Blood—and to distribute both through the Body! By means of which, the animal Constitution is maintained. In Youth, its Bulk is increased; in Age, its Decays are repaired; and it is kept in tenable Condition for the Soul, during the Space of seventy or eighty Years.

These are a few, and but a *very few* Instances of that Contrivance, Regularity, and Beauty,

* In the Point, where the Streams, from the *Vena cava* and *Vena ascendens*, coincide.

† In the great Artery, that descends to the Feet.

‡ In every Interval, between all the Ramifications.

|| In the Vessels, that carry the Blood to the Brain; that form the viscous Secretions; and indeed constitute all the Glands.

Béauty, which are observable in the human Frame. Attentive Inquirers discover deeper Footsteps of Design, and *more refined* Strokes of Skill. Discover them, not only in the grand and most distinguished Parts, but in every Limb, and in every Organ : I may venture to add, in every Fibre that is extended, and in every Globule * that flows.

Asp. What a *various*, but *uniform* System, is the Body ! I see the greatest Multiplicity of Parts, yet the most perfect Harmony subsists between them all. No one hinders, but each assists, the Operation of another ; and all conspire to the Benefit and Preservation of the Whole.—Most judiciously has the great Apostle touched this Subject ; and most happily applied it, to illustrate the Reasonableness, and inforce the Practice, both of *personal* and *social* Duties, of private Content and public Concord †.

The Body, He observés, *is not one Member, but many.* To each of which some peculiar and needful Office is assigned. So that the *Foot*, though placed in the lowest Order, and destin'd to serve on the very Ground, has no Reason

* The extreme *Minuteness* of the Globules, which form the *red* Part of our Blood, is one Exemplification of this Remark. If, as Mr. *Leuwenbosch* computes, every Globule be 25000 times smaller, than the smallest Grain of Sand.

† See 1 Cor. xii. 12, &c.

Reason to reckon itself a worthless Outcast; or to say, *Because I am not the Head, I am not of the Body.* Neither has the *Head*, in its elevated Situation and amidst its honourable Functions, any Cause to despise the inferior Limbs; or to say, with Contempt and Self-sufficiency, *I have no Need of You.*—If there were no Feet, what would become of the locomotive Faculty? Or how could the Body convey itself from one Place to another? If there were no Hands, what should we do for the Instruments of Action? Or how could the animal Frame be defended and accommodated?—Nay; the Parts, *which seem to be less honourable*, are necessary. Even those, which form the Sediments, or throw off the Dregs, are of the last Importance to Life and its Comforts. Should those be obstructed in their Action, the most raging Torment ensues; should the Obstruction continue, Death is the inevitable Consequence.—By this wise Adjustment, *there is no Schism in the Body*; no separate or interfering Ends are pursued by the Members; but the Safety and Support of each are the one undivided Care of all.

Thus should it be among Men, and among Christians; in the Civil Community, and in the Catholic Church. There is in both a *Subordination* of Persons, but a *Concatenation* of Interests. For which Reason, a general Agree-

ment

ment should take place, and a mutual Subserviency to each other's Welfare.—The *Meanest* have no Cause to be dissatisfied with their Condition; but to acquiesce in the unerring Disposal of Providence, and cheerfully contribute their Share to the common Good.—The *Highest* should condescend to Men of low Estate; and maintain a Regard to the Well-being of the Poorest, as that which is intimately connected with their own.—In a Word; *each* should feel a tender Concern for all; rejoicing in their Happiness, and studying to establish it; sympathizing with their Miseries, and endeavouring to heal them.

I am sure, my *Theron* will be pleased with this fine Comparison, used by the Apostle; and adapted to Purposes, at once so noble and so benevolent. Especially, as it receives additional Propriety and Force from his own Observations.—But I have one more Inquiry to make.

Your System, though *organized*, though indued with a Principle of *Motion*, and furnished with the Powers of *Nutrition*, is still destitute of *Sense*.—The Creation abounds with Objects, fitted to yield the most refined Entertainment. The Sun impurples the Robe of Morning, and Stars bespangle the Curtains of Night. Flowers of silver Whiteness, and of golden Lustre, enamel the Ground. Fruits of all radiant

diant Hues, and of every delicious Taste, hang amiably dangling on the Boughs.

— *Airs also, vernal Airs,
Breathing the Smell of Field and Grove, attune
The trembling Leaves.*

But We hear of no Capacities, formed for the *Enjoyment* of these various Delights. Without which, the Breath of Fields must lose its reviving Fragrance; the whispering Grove must degenerate into sullen Silence; and Nature's Book of Knowledge, all fair and instructive, be no better than a vast unmeaning Blank.

Ther. Therefore, the great CREATOR, profusely gracious to Mankind, has made Us a Present, an inestimable Present of the *Senses*. To be the Inlets of innumerable Pleasures, and the Means of administering the most valuable Advantages.

High in the Head, bright and conspicuous as a Star in the Brow of Evening, is placed the *Eye*. In this elevated Situation, like a Centinel posted in his Watch-tower, it commands the most enlarged Prospect.—Consisting only of simple Fluids, inclosed in thin Tunicles, it conveys to our Apprehension all the Graces of blooming Nature, and all the Glories of the visible Heavens.—How prodigiously wonderful! That an Image of the

bugest

bigest Mountains, and a Transcript of the most *diversified* Landſchapes, ſhall enter the ſmall *Circlet* of the Pupil!—How ſurprizingly artful! That the Rays of Light, like an inimitable Pencil, ſhould paint on the optic Nerves; paint in an Inſtant of Time; paint in their *trueſt* Colours, and *exacteſt* Lineaments, every Species of external Objects!

The Eye is ſo tender, that a ſlight Accident, ſcarcely perceived by ſome other Parts of the Body, would be very injurious to its delicate Frame. It is guarded therefore with peculiar Care: with a Care, proportioned to its nice Texture, and extenſive Uſefulneſs. It is *intrenched* deep in the Head, and *barricaded*, on every Side, with a ſtrong Fortification of Bones. As the Incuſion of the ſmalleſt Fly would incommode the poliſhed Surface, it is farther protected by two ſubſtantial *Curtains*, hung on a moſt ſlender cartilaginous Rod. Which ſecure it, not barely from Blows, and from any hurtful Attrition, but alſo from every troubleſome Annoyance. In Sleep, when there is no Occaſion to exerciſe the Senſe, but an abſolute Neceſſity to guard the Organ, theſe Curtains *ſpontaneouſly* cloſe, and never fail to lie ſhut. At any Time, they will *ſly* together with a Motion, quick as the Alarm of Fear, I had almoſt ſaid, quicker than Thought itſelf. At all Times, they are lined with an extremely

fine Sponge*, wet with its own *native Dews*. Which lubricate the Eye-ball; oil, as it were, its Wheels; and fit it for a Course of uncommon Activity.—At the End of this skinny Mantelet (if I may use the military Style) is planted a Range of bristly *Pallisades*†. Which keep out the least Mote; ward off even the straggling Atom; and moderate the otherwise too potent Impressions of the Sun-beams‡.

The Brows are a kind of natural *Pent-house*, thatched and arched with curious Wreaths of Hair. The Thatch is intended to divert the Sweat, from trickling into the Eyes, and offending them with its Brine. The *Arches* are so finely coloured, and so elegantly turned, that

* The *Glandula Lachrymalis* and its Ducts; opening on the inner Part of the Eye-lid, and secreting the Fluid, which *Theron* calls his Oil; because, it irrigates the Eye-ball, and facilitates its Motion.

† The Hairs, that arise upon the Extremities of the Eye-lash, grow only to a certain convenient Length, and never need cutting.—They are not flaccid and pendulous, like those of the Head; but *stiff* and *elastic*, like Bristles. The first would have been troublesome, the last are beneficial.—Add to this, that their Points stand out of the Way; those of the upper Eye-lid being bent upwards, and those of the lower downwards.—So nice is Nature, even in such small Matters!

‡ The tender, the incessant, the more than fatherly Care, which the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY takes of his People, is represented in Scripture by this extraordinary Provision, made for the Security of the Eye. Which is one of the *finest* Images, that Fancy can form; and one of the most *consolatory* Truths, that Faith can believe. *He kept Him as the Apple of his Eye.* Deut. xxxii. 10.—*He that toucheth You, toucheth the Apple of his Eye.* Zech. ii. 8.

DIALOGUE XII. 211

that they set off the Whiteness of the Forehead, and bestow additional Grace on the whole Countenance.—Because, in our waking Hours, there is almost an incessant Call for those little Orbs, they run upon the finest *Casters*; rolling upwards or downwards, to the Right-hand or to the left; with the utmost Speed, and with equal Ease. Which Circumstance, added to the Flexibility of the Neck, renders our *two* Eyes as useful, as if the whole Body, like the living Creatures in St. *John's* Vision, was full of Eyes before and behind*.

The Ear consists of an outward Porch and inner Rooms, with Tools of the most admirable Contrivance and finished Workmanship. The Contrivance and the Workmanship incomparably nicer, than the Designs of *Palladio*, or the Architecture of *Solomon's* Temple; though the former were drawn from the magnificent Monuments of *Rome*, though the latter was built in the Taste of *Heaven*. Yea, so consummately nice is the Structure of this Organ, that GOD, the only Wise GOD, is not ashamed to be called its Artificer. *He that planted the Ear*†, is to be found among the Titles of the exalted JEHOVAH.—In one very remarkable Peculiarity, this minute Fabric resembles that sacred Edifice, the Porch being

* *Rev.* iv. 6.

† *Psal.* xciv. 9.

being loftier * than any other Part of the Building.

The *Porch* I call that semicircular Lodge, which stands somewhat prominent from the Head; and is—not *soft* and *sinking* as *Flesh*, lest it should absorb the Sound, rather than promote its Repercussion; not *hard* and *stubborn* as *Bone*, lest it should occasion painful Inconveniencies, when We repose Ourselves on either Side—but of a *cartilaginous* Substance, covered with a tight Expansion of Membranes, and wrought into sinuous Cavities. Which, like circling Hills, or surrounding rocky Shores †, collect the wandering Undulations of the Air; and transmit them, with a vigorous Impulse, to the finely stretched Membrane of the Tympanum ‡.—The *Avenue*, or narrow Entry, is secured from the insinuating Attempts of little Insects, by a *Morass* (shall I say?) of bitter and viscous Matter: dis-

* Compare 1 *Kings* vi. 2. with 2 *Chron.* iii. 4.

† Alluding to those expressive Lines, where *Echo* seems to live in the Sound, as well as in the Sense;

—————*Vocemque inclusa volutant*

Littora, pulsati Colles Clamore resultant.

Virg.

‡ So called, because it resembles a *Drum*, both in Figure and Use. Being a fine Skin, expanded upon a Circle of Bones, and over a polished reverberating Cavity.—It is affected by the Vibrations of the external Air, as the Covering of the War-drum is by the Impressions of the Stick.—It is also furnished with *Braces*, that strain or relax at pleasure; and accommodate its Tension either to loud or languid Sounds.

disgustful to their Taste, and embarrassing to their Feet.—The *Hammer* and the *Anvil*; the *Stirrup* and the *Drum*; the winding Labyrinths*, and the sounding Galleries; these, and other Pieces of Mechanism, all instrumental to the Power of Hearing, are beyond Description curious.

Amazingly nice must be the Formation, and inconceivably exact the Tension, of the auditory Nerves: since they correspond with the smallest Tremors of the Atmosphere, and easily distinguish their most subtle Variations. The ruder Blasts, perceivable by the whole external Body, have very little Effect upon these delicate Strings. Whereas, they are perfect *Unisons* with those fine, those, *significant* Agitations of the Air, which the acutest Touch is unable to discern. These living Chords, tuned by an ALMIGHTY HAND, and diffused through the echoing Isles, and sonorous Cells—these receive the Impressions of Sound, and propagate them to the Brain. These †

give

* Of this Kind is the auditory Tube; intended to *soften* and *qualify* the rushing Sound. Lest, if the IncurSION were direct, it might be too impetuous, and injure the delicate Expanse of the Tympanum.—While this is designed to moderate, the Concavities of the inner Structure are prepared to *heighten* and *invigorate* the Sound, by calling in the auxiliary Force of an Echo.—Such Intentions, so *varying*, nay so *opposite*, concur to form this admirable Organ!

† Elegantly styled, *The Daughters of Music*. For this Phrase may refer, as well to the Organs which *distinguish*,

give Existence to the Charms of Music, and reciprocate the rational Entertainments of Discourse. These treat my *Aspasio* with the Melody of the Woodland Choirs, and afford me the superior Pleasure of my Friend's Conversation.

The Eye perceives only the Objects that are before it; whereas, the Ear warns Us of Transactions, that pass above Us, behind Us, all around Us.—The Eye is useless, amidst the Gloom of Night; and cannot carry its Observation, through the bolted Door, or the closed Window-shutter. But the Ear admits her Intelligence, through the *darkest* Medium, and the *minuteſt* Cranny.—The Eye is upon Duty, only in our waking Hours; but the Ear is always expanded, and always accessible *: a Courier, that never tires: a Centry, ever in his Box.—To secure a Resource, in case any Misfortune should disable *one* of the hear-

as to those which *form*, the harmonious Accents. *Ecclef. xii. 4.*—Methinks, I am always desirous to add any *apposite* Expression, or *parallel* Passage from the BIBLE. As I find, Writers of Taste and Politeness are studious to embellish their Works, with Quotations from the *Classics*. And I persuade myself, the Reader will allow me to gratify this favourite Inclination. Because, every Portion of that inestimable Book, however minute, is like the Filings of Gold, or the Sparks of a Diamond. Is sure, when properly applied, to add *Worth*, and impart *Beauty*.

* *Auditus autem semper patet. Ejus enim Sensus etiam dormientes egemus. A quo, cum Sonus est acceptus, etiam e Somno excitimur.*

De Nat. Deor.

hearing or seeing Organs, our all-gracious MAKER has given Us *Duplicates* of each.

As there are tremulous Concussions impressed upon the Air, discernable only by the Instruments of Hearing; there are also *odoriferous* Particles, wafted by the same aerial Vehicle, which are perceivable only by the *Smell*.—The Nostrils are wide at the Bottom, that a large Quantity of Effluvia may enter; narrow at the Top, that, when entered, they may close their Ranks, and act with greater Vigour.—Fine, beyond all Imagination, are the Steams which exhale from fetid or fragrant Bodies. The very best Microscopes, that discover *thousands* and *thousands* of Animalcules in a Drop of putrified Water, cannot bring *one* Individual, among all these evanescent Legions, to our Sight. They sail, in numberless Squadrons, close to our Eyes, close by our Ears; yet are so amazingly attenuated, that they elude all our Search. Nevertheless, so judiciously * are the *olfactory* Nets laid, and so artfully their Meshes sized, that they catch these vanishing Fugitives. They catch the roaming Perfumes, that fly off from the opening Honey-suckle;

* The *Keeness* and *Sagacity* of this Sense, furnished the evangelical Prophet with a beautiful Metaphor, to display the *Accuracy* of the MESSIAH's Judgment, and his unerringly nice Discernment in spiritual Things. קריין literally rendered, signifies *Shall make him to smell*: which is accommodated to our Language, and properly enough translated, *Shall make Him of quick Understanding*. Isai. xi. 3.

neyfuckle; and take in the stationed Sweets, that hover round the expanded Rose. They imbibe all the balmy Fragrance of Spring, all the aromatic Exhalations of Autumn, and enable Us to banquet even on the *invisible* Dainties of Nature.

—Furnished with these several Organs,

————— *Not a Breeze*

*Flies o'er the Meadow, not a Cloud imbibes
The setting Sun's Effulgence, not a Strain
From all the Tenants of the warbling Shade
Ascends, but whence our Senses can partake
Fresh Pleasure*.*

Another Capacity for frequent Pleasure, our bountiful CREATOR has bestowed, in granting Us the Powers of *Taste*. By means of which, the Food that supports our Body, feasts our Palate; first, treats Us with a pleasing Regale; then, distributes its beneficial Recruits. —The Razor, whetted with Oil, becomes more exquisitely keen. The *Saliva*, flowing upon the Tongue, and moistening its Nerves, quickens them into the liveliest Acts of Sensation. —This Sense is circumstanced, in a Manner peculiarly benign and wise; so as to be a standing, though silent Plea for *Temperance*. Without recurring to the Vengeance of GOD, or the Terrors of eternal Judgment, it is a power-

* See that very elegant Poem, *The Pleasures of Imagination*. B. III.

powerful Dissuasive from irregular and excessive Indulgencies. Because, the Exercise of Sobriety, sets the finest Edge on its Faculties; and adds the most *poignant* Relish to its Enjoyments. Whereas, Riot and Voluptuousness *pall* the Appetite; blunt its Sensibility; and render the Gratifications, extremely languid, if not perfectly insipid.—The Sight, the Smell, the Taste are, not only so many separate Sources of Delight, but a joint Security to our Health. They are the *vigilant* and *accurate* Inspectors, that examine our Food, and inquire into its Properties; whether it be pleasant or disagreeable; wholesome or noxious. For the Discharge of this Office, they are excellently qualified, and most commodiously situate. So that nothing can gain Admission through the Mouth, till it has undergone their Scrutiny, and obtained their Passport.

To all these, as a most necessary and advantageous Supplement, is added the Sense of *Feeling*. Which renders the whole Assemblage complete.—While other Senses have a particular Place of Residence; this is diffused throughout *the whole* Body. In the Palms of the Hands, on the Tips of the Fingers, and indeed through all the extreme Parts of the Flesh, it is most quick and lively: as the advanced Guards, or Scouts upon the Frontiers,
are

are or ought to be peculiarly attentive and wakeful. Scouts did I say? The whole Army of *Xerxes*, drawn out in Battle array, with his *Millions* of supernumerary Attendants*, were but like a few *Gleaners* straggling in the Field; if compared, either in Number or Order, with those nervous Detachments, which pervade the Texture of the Skin, and minister to the Act of Feeling.—How happily is this Sense tempered between the two Extremes! Neither so *acute*, as the Membranes of the Eye; nor so *obtuse*, as the Callus of the Heel. The former would expose Us to continual Pain; render our Clothes galling, and the very Down oppressive. The latter would quite benumb the Body, and almost annihilate the Touch.—Nor this alone, but *all* the Senses are exactly adapted to their respective Offices, and to the Exigencies of our present State. Were they *strained* to a much higher Tone, they would be Avenues of Anguish. Were they *relaxed* into greater Insensibility, they would be so many useless Encumbrances.

Ass. How admirable and gracious is this Provision, which the blessed GOD has made, to accommodate Us with delightful Sensations, and instructive Ideas!—The Taste, the Touch, and

* The Soldiers and Attendants of *Xerxes*, amounted to five Millions two hundred and eighty Thousand. Another Army, so large and numerous, occurs not in all the Records of History.

Vid. Herod. Lib. VII.

and the Smell, are somewhat *straitened* in the Extent of their Operations. The Ear carries on a Correspondence with a *larger* Circle of Objects. But the Sight most amply supplies, whatever is wanting in all the other Senses. The Sight spreads itself to an *infinite* Multitude of Bodies; and brings within our Notice some of the *remotest* Parts of the Universe.—The Taste, the Touch, the Smell, perceive nothing but what is brought to their very Doors. Whereas, the Eye extends its Observation, as far as the Orbit of *Saturn*; nay glances, and in an Instant of Time, to the inconceivable Distance of the Stars. The Compass of the Earth, and the Immensity of the Skies, are its unlimited Range.

From this remarkable Variety, with regard to the *Sphere* and *Activity* of the Senses, St. Paul forms one of the finest, boldest, and most important Comparisons in the World. By this He illustrates the Difference between the Wisdom, which is derived from the Word of divine Revelation; and the Wisdom, which is acquired by Dint of human Application.—In his Oration to the *Athenians*, speaking of their most celebrated Sages, He says; *If so be, they might feel after, and find HIM**. In his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, speaking of the Man *Moses*, our Author observes; That *He endured*

as

* *Act* xviii. 27. Εἰ οὖν γε ὑπεφρονεῖσιν αὐτῶν.

as seeing *Him who is invisible* *. Writing to his *Corinthian* Converts, He adds, as a farther Heightening of the Contrast; *We all beholding with open Face the Glory of the LORD* † — The Knowledge of the *Philosopher*, is like that obscure and scanty Information, which is to be obtained by groping with the Hand, in a dark Night. The Knowledge of the *Christian*, is like that copious Influx of clear and enlarged Ideas, which We receive by the Mediation of the Eye, amidst the Shining of a bright Day.

Tully, We find, has, in the Book before Us, hit upon some of the most general and obvious Uses, to which the several Parts of the human Body are adapted. Yet how *superficial* and *deficient* appears his Penetration, when We take in the much deeper Discoveries, and the much higher Improvements of our modern Philosophy! Thus, and abundantly more defective, is his Knowledge of moral Duties and divine Doctrines; when compared with what is taught Us, in the *plain* Sermon on the Mount, and the unstudied Epistles of the *Jewish* Tent-maker.

Therefore, though I would bless the beneficent G O D, for the Ministration of all the Senses, and particularly for the noble Organs of Vision: I would be more especially thank-
ful

* *Heb. xi. 27.*† *2. Cor. iii. 18.*

ful for that Light of the World, *CHRIST JESUS* and his glorious Gospel; as well as for that *spiritual Eye**, by which the One is understood, and the Other seen—a *lively Faith*. I would also long for that Place of beatific Enjoyment, where our Views of the adorable *GODHEAD*, and our Acquaintance with the sublimest Truths, will as much transcend all our present Apprehensions, as the most enlightened *Saint* exceeds the benighted *Gentile*.

Ther. The crowning Gift—That which improves the Satisfaction, and augments the beneficial Effects, accruing from all the Senses, is *Speech*.—Speech makes me a Gainer, from the Eyes and Ears of other People; from the Ideas they conceive, and the Observations they make. And what an admirable Instrument, for articulating the Voice, and modifying it into Speech, is the *Tongue*!—The Tongue has neither Bone nor Joint; yet fashions itself, with the utmost Volubility, into every Shape and every Posture, that can express Sentiment, or constitute Harmony. This little Collection of muscular Fibres, under the conducting Skill of the *CREATOR*, is the Artificer of

* *Luke xxiv. 45: Then opened He their Understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures.* *ἀνοίξεν* is the Word used in this Place; and the Word used by the evangelical Historian, when He relates that *supernatural Act*, which gave Sight to the Blind.

of our Words *. By this We communicate the *Secrets* of the Breast, and make our very *Thoughts* audible. By this We instruct the Ignorant, and comfort the Distressed; We glorify GOD, and edify each Other †; the Academic explains the abstrusest Sciences, and the Ecclesiastic preaches the everlasting Gospel.—This is likewise the Efficient of *Music*. It is soft as the Lute, or shrill as the Trumpet; it can warble as the Lyre, or resound like the Organ. Connecting the sacred Anthem with its tuneful Strains, We sooth the Cares, and beguile the Toils of Life: We imitate the Angelic Choirs, and anticipate, in some Degree, their celestial Joys.—As the Tongue requires full Scope, and an easy Play, it is lodged

* I am sensible, that the *Glottis* has a considerable Share, in modulating the Sound, and forming the Voice. But, as the Nature and Office of this most curious *Aperture*, are very little known by the Generality of People; We choose to follow the popular Opinion, so neatly described by the Poet,

Dedala Lingua,
Lingua figuratrix Verborum, Opifexque Loquelæ.
Anti-Lucret.

† The articulating Tongue is called *Our Glory*, Psal. lvii. 8. And such indeed it is, when devoted to *these* Purposes. It is then a Distinction, not only of Man from the brutal Herd, but of the Righteous from the Congregation of the Ungodly. It is then like *choice Silver*, or as a *Tree of Life*.

*Who would not bless for this the Gift of Speech,
And in the Tongue's Beneficence be rich?*

ed in an ample Cavity ; and surrounded with Reservoirs of Spittle, always ready to distil the lubricating Dews. It moves under a concave Roof, which serves as a *Sounding-board* to the Voice ; giving it much the same additional Vigour and Grace, as the Shell of a Violin adds to the Language of the Strings.

Wife—wonderfully wise, and eminently gracious, is the Regulation both of *spontaneous* and *involuntary* Motion. Was this Regulation reversed, what deplorable Inconveniencies would take place ; nay, what unavoidable Ruin would ensue !—*Deplorable Inconveniencies*, if the Discharges of the Bowels, or Evacuations of the Bladder, were quite independent on our Leave. *Unavoidable Ruin*, if the Action of the Heart, required the Co-operation of our Thoughts ; or the Business of Respiration, waited for the Concurrence of our Will.

The Will, in some Cases, has not so much as a single Vote. In others, She *determines* and *commands*, like an absolute Sovereign ; nor is there a Monarch upon Earth so punctually obeyed, as this Queen of the human System. If She but intimate her Pleasure, the Spirits run, they fly, to execute her Orders ; to stretch the Arm or close the Hand ; to furrow the Brow with Frowns, or dimple the Cheek with Smiles. How *easily*, as well as *punctually*, are these Orders carried into Execution ! To turn
the

the Screw, or work the Lever, is laborious and wearisome. But We move the Vertebrae, with all their appendent Chambers; We advance the Leg, with the whole incumbent Body; We rise from our Seat; We spring from the Ground; and, though much Force is exerted, though a very considerable Weight is raised, We meet with no Difficulty, We complain of no Fatigue.

That all this should be effected, without any Toil, and by a *bare Act* of the Will, is very surprising. But that these Motions should be made, renewed, continued, even while We remain *intirely* ignorant of the *Manner*, in which they are performed, is beyond measure astonishing.—Who can play so much as a *single* Tune upon the Spinnet, without learning the Difference of the Keys, or studying the Rudiments of Music? Impossible! Yet the Mind of Man touches *every* Spring of the human Machine, with the most masterly Skill; though She knows nothing at all, concerning the Nature of her Implements, or the Process of her Operations.

Put a *German* Flute into the Hand even of a sensible Person: without a Master to instruct Him, He is at a loss to make the Instrument speak: much less is He able to modulate the Sound, into a Variety of harmonious Notes.—But We are self-taught in
the

the Method of *forming, regulating, and varying* the Voice. Naturally, and with unpremeditated Fluency, We give it the languishing Cadence of Sorrow, or the sprightly Airs of Joy; the low faltering Accents of Fear, or the elevated Tone and rapid Sallies of Anger.

The Eye of a Rustic, who has no Notion of Optics, or any of its Laws, shall *lengthen* and *shorten* its Axis; *dilate* and *contract* its Pupil, without the least Hesitation, and with the utmost Propriety: adapting itself, with mathematical Exactness, to the particular Distance of Objects, and the different Degrees of Light. By which means, it performs some of the most curious Experiments in the improved *Newtonian* Philosophy, without the least Knowledge of the Science, or so much as any Consciousness of its own Dexterity.

Which shall We most admire? The Multitude of animated Organs; their finished Form, and their faultless Order?—Or, the *Power* and *Sway* which the Soul exercises over them? Ten thousand Reins put into her Hands; yet she manages all, conducts all, without the least Perplexity or the least Irregularity: rather, with a Promptitude, a Consistency, and a Speed, that nothing else can equal!

Upon the Whole—Great Reason had *Euripides* to call the human Body,

Σοφὴ τέχνη καλὸν ποικίλμα.

I believe, the preceding Observations will justify Us, if We give a fuller Meaning to the Poet, and translate his Words—*The infinitely varied, and inimitably fine Workmanship, of a great, supreme, unerring ARTIST.* Or, as *Virgil* speaks, with a Pertinency and a Spirit, that epitomizes all I have said, and expresses all I would say; This bodily Structure is indeed—*Non enarrabile Textum* *.

Asp. Wonderfully and fearfully are we made †! Made of such complicated Parts; each so nicely fashioned, and all so exactly arranged ‡; every one executing such curious Functions, and many of them operating in so mysterious a Manner; as may justly render Us a Wonder to Ourselves.—Since Health depends upon such a numerous Assemblage of moving Organs: since a single Secretion stopped, may destroy the salutary Temperature of the Fluids; or a single Wheel clogged, may put an End to the Motion of the Solids: with what holy Fear, should We pass the Time of our Sojourning Here below ||! Trusting, for continual Preservation, not merely

* That is, A Structure, not barely correct, or highly finished, but (as *Theron* has elsewhere expressed it) beyond Description curious.

† *Psalms* cxxxix. 14.

‡ *St. Paul's* Language on the Subject is exceedingly beautiful and expressive, *Συναρμολογημενον και συμπηδαζομενον.* Eph. iv. 16. Each Part most exactly harmonizing with the Whole, and all connected together with the utmost Firmness.

|| *1 Pet.* i. 17.

ly on our own Care, but on that OMNIPO-
TENT HAND, which formed the admirable
Machine, superintends its Agency, and sup-
ports its Being *.

When We consider the extensive Contri-
vance, and delicate Mechanism—What Plans
of Geometry, have been laid; what Opera-
tions of Chemistry, are performed; in a Word,
what Miracles of Art and Elegance are exe-
cuted; in order to furnish Us with the ne-
cessary Recruits, and the several Delights of
Life—Is there not abundant Reason to cry
out, with the same inspired Writer; “*How*
“ *dear are thy Counsels unto me, O GOD! Thy*
“ *Counsels of creating Wisdom! Thou hast*
“ *not been sparing, but even lavish of thy*
“ *indulgent Designs. Thou hast omitted no*
“ *Expedient, that might establish my Ease,*
“ *inlarge my Comforts; and promote, yea*
“ *complete my bodily Happiness!*” And is
not this a most endearing Obligation *to glorify*
the blessed GOD, with our Bodies, as well as
with our Spirits †?

Ther. Our Spirits! Ay; what is this Man-
sion of Flesh, though so exquisitely wrought,
com-

* Agreeably to that philosophical Maxim, *Creatio & Con-*
servatio eadem est Actio: and to those scriptural Acknowledg-
ments, It is GOD, *who holdeth our Soul in Life; He is the*
Length of our Days; his Visitation prolongeth our Spirit.

† 1 Cor. vi. 20.

compared with the noble and immortal Inhabitant, which resides within?

—That intellectual Being;

*Those Thoughts, which wander through Eternity *!*

This Consideration inclines me to think, that, if the *Casket* be so highly polished, the *Jewel* cannot be so excessively coarse, as my *Aspasio's* Doctrine of original Corruption supposes.

Asp. I perceive your Aim, *Theron*. But must beg Leave to decline all Overtures for a Dispute. If my *Arguments* have failed, your *Description* has answered its End.—I cannot suffer myself, at present, to be diverted to any other Topic. My Thoughts must be kept free for this glorious Subject. I have such a strong Desire to *recollect, retain, and digest* what has been observed, that even your Conversation will, at this Juncture, lose its Relish. Here therefore I put my Finger upon my Mouth, and put a Period to our Discourse. Unless You will permit me, before I retire, to make one Remark.—And let it not startle my Friend, if I venture to say, That, amidst all his curious Observations, He has forgot the principal Circumstance of *Honour and Excellence*, which dignifies the human Body.

Ther.

* *Milton.*

Ther. I have omitted many fine and noble Properties, I confess. But sure I have not forgot the *principal* and most distinguishing.

Ass. You need not be displeased with Yourself. It argues no Defect in your Dissertation. The Circumstance I have in my View, could never be discovered, by following the dissecting Knife. It is learnt, not from *Cbeselden's* Draughts, or the Tables of *Albinus*; but from the Word of Revelation. What I mean, is This—The human Body was exalted to a most intimate and *personal Union*, with the eternal SON of GOD. He who decorated the Heaven with Stars, and crowned the Stars with Lustre; *HE vouchsafed to be made Flesh* *, and was found in Fashion as a Man †.—Nay, this is, even now, the Apparel of that divine and adorable PERSON. He is clothed with Limbs, and appears in the Dress of Humanity, even at the Right-hand of GOD, and at the Head of all the Heavenly Hosts.

What think You of another Prerogative, recorded in Scripture? *Your Bodies are the Temple of the HOLY GHOST* ‡. They are the Shrine, in which *the HIGH and HOLY ONE, that inhabiteth Eternity*, vouchsafes to dwell. HE, who sitteth between the Cherubim, and walketh in the Circuit of the Skies,

is

* *John* i. 14.

† *Phil.* ii. 8.

‡ *1 Cor.* vi. 19.

is pleased to sanctify these earthly Tenements for his own Habitation. And is not this a *much grander* Embellishment, than all their matchless Contrivance and masterly Workmanship? Just as the *Rod* that budded, and the *Manna* that was miraculously preserved; the sacred *Oracle* of *Urim* and *Thummim*, and the *Cloud* of Glory covering the Mercy-Seat; were a much greater Distinction to *Solomon's* Temple, than the most heightened and striking Beauties of Architecture.

Nor must I neglect to mention the Dignity—the transcendent and amazing Dignity—which is reserved for these Systems of Flesh, at the *Resurrection* of the Just. They will then be refined and improved, into the most perfect State, and the most beauteous Form. Surpassing whatever is resplendent and amiable in the most ornamental Appearances of material Nature. They will be purer than the unspotted Firmament; brighter than the Lustre of the Stars; and, which exceeds all Parallel, which comprehends all Perfection, they will *be made like unto CHRIST's glorious Body* *. Like that wonderfully glorious Body, which the blessed *JESUS* wears, in his celestial Kingdom, and on his triumphant Throne.

When We add all these magnificent Peculiarities, which are revealed in Scripture, to all those

* *Phil. iii. 21.*

those inimitable Niceties, which are displayed by Anatomists, what Thankfulness, what Admiration, can equal such a Profusion of Favours?

*When all thy Mercies, O my GOD,
My rising Soul surveys,
Transported with the View I'm lost
In Wonder, Love, and Praise!*





DIALOGUE XIII.



HE Morning had been wet. At Noon the Rain ceased. But the Heavens still continued gloomy. —Towards Evening, a gentle eastern Gale sprung up; which dissipated the dead Calm, and cleared the Face of the Sky.—The Sun, that had been muffled in Clouds, dropped the Veil. Disengaged from the dusky Shroud, He shone forth with *peculiar Splendor*. His Beams, endeared by their late Suspension, were doubly welcome, and produced *unusual Gaiety*.

At this Juncture, *Theron* and *Aspasio* walked abroad. They walked alternately on the Terraces; one of which was opposite to the Country, the other contiguous to the Parterre.—Where the Gales, impregnated with the *freshest* Exhalations of Nature, breathed the Smell of Meads, and Heaths, and Groves.—Or else, shaking the Clusters of Roses, and sweeping the
the

the Beds of Fragrance, they flung *Balm* and *Odours* through the Air.

At a Distance, were heard the Bleatings of the Flock, mingled with the Lowings of the milky Mothers. While more melodious Music, warbled from the neighbouring Boughs, and spoke aloud the Joy of their feathered Inhabitants.—And not only spoke their Joy, but spread an *additional* Charm over all the Landscape. For, amidst such Strains of native Harmony, the breathing Perfumes smell more sweet; the streaming Rills shine more clear; and the universal Prospect looks more gay.

Then was experienced, what *Milton* so delicately describes;

*If chance the radiant Sun with farewell Sweet
Extend his Evening Beam, the Fields revive,
The Birds their Notes renew, and bleating Herds
Attest their Joy, that Hill and Valley rings.*

They could not but observe, with Wonder and Delight, the exquisite Beauty, and immense Magnificence of Things.—They were struck with the deepest Admiration of that ALMIGHTY MAJESTY; who hung the Sun in Vaults of Azure, and clothed his Orb with Robes of Lustre. Whose *Right-hand* spanneth the Heavens*, and stretcheth them out as a Tent, for innumerable Creatures, Worlds, Systems

to

* *Isaiah* xlviii. 13.

to dwell in *.—Charmed they were, at the Consideration of the CREATOR's boundless Beneficence. Who lifts up the Light of his Countenance, and Joy is shed; who opens his munificent Hand, and Plenty is poured, throughout all the Regions of the Universe. Infomuch, that even inanimate Beings seem to smile under a Sense of the Blessings: and though they find not a Tongue to praise, yet speak their Acclamations by their *gladdened Looks*.

Tber. How very different, *Aspasio*, is this delightful Appearance of Things, from your ill-favoured Doctrine of original Guilt, and original Depravity! Your Doctrine is a Contradiction to the Language of Nature. Nature says, through all her Works, "That GOD is good, and Men are made to be *happy*." Whereas, your Opinion would turn the whole World into a vast Hospital, and make every individual Person, a *Leper* or a *Lazarus*.

Asp. I join with my *Tberon*, and with universal Nature, in bearing witness to the Goodness of our GOD. And nothing, I am persuaded, displays it more, nothing manifests it so much, as the Doctrine of our *Fall in Adam*, connected with our *Recovery in CHRIST*.—
Only

* *Isaiah* xl. 22.

Only in one Particular I am obliged to dissent. It is not my Opinion, that *would make*, but the Sin of our Forefather that *has made*, the whole World an Infirmary, and every individual Person a Leper.

Ther. At this Rate, You would croud into that *single* Act of Disobedience, Evils more numerous, and more fatal, than the Plagues that were lodged in *Pandora's* Box, or the Troops that were stowed in the *Trojan* Horse.

Ass. Far more numerous, and infinitely more pernicious.—The Fable of *Pandora's* Box seems to have been a Shred of the Doctrine, picked up by the Heathen Wits, and fashioned according to their sportive Fancy. This would, if there was any Occasion for such weak Assistance, bring in the *Pagan* Theology, as a subsidiary Evidence to our Cause.—The *Trojan* Horse poured Ruin upon a single City; but the primitive Transgression intailed Misery upon all Generations.

Ther. You have advanced this heavy Charge pretty strenuously, I must confess. But without descending to Facts, or appealing to Experience. All the Invectives are *general* and *declamatory*, none pointing and particular.

Ass. It is easy, my dear Friend, too easy to draw up a particular Bill of Indictment; and not only to *specify* the Facts, but to *demonstrate* the Charge. Experience, sad Experience will furnish

furnish Us with a Cloud of Witnesses, and prove my Remonstrances to be more than Invectives.

Were we to dissect human Nature, as, in our last Conversation, You treated the animal System, we should find the Leprosy of Corruption, spreading itself through our whole Frame. For which Reason, it is styled, by an inspired Writer, "The old Man *."—*Old*; because, in its Commencement, it was early as the Fall; and, in its Communication to Individuals, is coeval with their Being.—*Man*; because it has tainted the Body, infected the Soul, and disordered the whole Person.

St. Paul, describing a profligate Conversation, speaks in this remarkable Manner; *fulfilling the Desires of the Flesh, and of the Mind*†. By the Desires of the Flesh, He means those irregular Inclinations, which correspond with the *animal* Part of our Frame. By the Desires of the Mind, those evil Propensities, which are more immediately seated in the *intellectual* Faculties. And by both, He very strongly expresses the *total* Depravation of our Nature.

Ther. What You call *evil Propensities*, I am apt to think, are not really sinful, but appointed for the *Trial* of our Virtue.—Nay, since they are confessedly *natural*, they cannot be in themselves evil. Because, upon this Supposition,

* Rom. vi. 6.

† Eph. ii. 3.

position, GOD, who is the Author of our Nature, would be the Author also of our Sin.

Ass. Then You imagine, that Propensities to Evil, are void of Guilt. This is the *Popish* Notion, but neither the *Mosaic* nor the *Apostolic* Doctrine.—In the Law of *Moses* it is written, *Tbou shalt not covet* *. The divine Legislator prohibits, not only the iniquitous Practice, but the evil Desire.—The Apostle gives it in Charge to the *Colossians*, *Mortify your Members, which are upon the Earth; Fornication, Uncleanness, inordinate Affection, and, which is the Source of all, evil Concupiscence* †. Now, can *that* be free from Guilt, which We are commanded to mortify? Which, if not mortified, denominates Us Children of Disobedience, and subjects Us to the Wrath ‡ of GOD?

Though these Propensities are confessedly natural, they may be evil notwithstanding. *St. Paul* opposes what is natural, to what is spiritual. Instead of commending it, as innocent; He condemns it, as *foolish* ||, *base* §, and *criminal* ¶.—Neither does this make the AUTHOR of our Nature, the Author of our Sin. But it proves, that our Nature has sustained a deplorable Loss: that it is quite different from its original State: that, what is

spoken

* *Exod. xx. 17.* † *Col. iii. 5.* ‡ *Col. iii. 6.*
 || *1 Cor. ii. 14.* § *2 Pet. ii. 12.* ¶ *Eph. ii. 3.*

spoken of the *Israelitish* People, is applicable to the *human* Race; *I planted Thee a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed: how then art Thou turned into the degenerate Plant of a strange Vine* *?

However, let Us observe your Proposal: dwell no longer on general Hints, but descend to a particular Examination. As our Examination will chiefly respect the *Soul*, let me inquire, What are her *principal* Faculties?

Ther. The *Understanding*, the *Will*, and the *Affections*. These are the most distinguished Powers, which that Queen of the human Oeconomy retains in her Service.—These, like the several Distributions of some ample River, run through the whole Man; to quicken, fertilize, and enrich all his Conversation.—But You represent them *bitter*, as the Waters of *Marah*; *unwholesome*, as the Streams of *Jericho*; *noxious*, as the Pottage prepared for the Sons of the Prophets.

Asp. Nor is this a Misrepresentation. For, such they really are; till divine Grace, like *Moses's* Wood †, like *Elisba's* Salt ‡, or the Meal || cast in by that holy Man of GOD, *sweeten* them, *purify* them, and render their Operations *salutary*.

The *Understanding* claims our first Regard.—This, however qualified to serve the Purposes

* *Jer.* ii. 21. † *Exod.* xv. 25. ‡ *2 Kings* ii. 21, 22.
|| *2 Kings* iv. 41.

poses of civil Life, is unable to discover the Truths, in which *Wisdom* consists; or to form the Tempers, from which *Happiness* flows.

Let Us take our Specimen, not from the uncultivated Savages of *Afric*, but from the politest Nation in *Europe*.—The *Grecians* piqued themselves on their intellectual Accomplishments. They termed all the rest of Mankind *Barbarians*. Yet, even these Sons of Science, *professing themselves wise, were, in Fact, egregious Fools* *.—Not to enumerate the shocking Immoralities, which the Poets ascribed to their Deities. Not to insist upon the gross Idolatries, which the common People practised in their Worship. Even their *Philosophers*, the most improved and penetrating Geniuses, were unacquainted with the very *first Principle* † of true Religion. Even they could not pronounce, with an unfaltering Tongue ‡, “*GOD is ONE.*”

Ther.

* *Rom. i. 22.*

† *The first of all the Commandments is, Hear, O Israel, The LORD our GOD is ONE LORD; and Thou shalt love the LORD, &c.* From which it appears, that the *Unity of the GODHEAD*, is the Foundation of all the divine Commandments, and of all human Worship.

‡ *Unfaltering*—For though, in *Plato's Book of Laws*, We meet with a *Θεός—ἄρα Θεός—ἄρα Θεός* again and again; yet He soon departs from this *sound Speech*, and relapses into the Language of Idolatry.

A learned and ingenious Friend, would fain have *Socrates* exempted from this Charge.—I wish, I could gratify his benevolent Temper, and spare that amiable Philosopher. But, however

Ther. With regard to the Philosophers, the Prejudices of a wrong Education, might pervert their Judgment; or, in Compliance with the prevailing Mode, they might adopt Customs, and assent to Notions, which they did not thoroughly approve.

Asp. A poor Compliment this to their Integrity! Had I been their Advocate, methinks, I would have given up the Sagacity of my Clients, rather than their Fidelity to the Cause of GOD and Truth.

With
however justly He may express Himself on some Occasions, at other Times He wavers; He evidently revolts; and is most pitiously inconsistent with Himself.—Even in his excellent Conference with *Aristodemus*, where He argues admirably well for the *Existence*, He cannot steadily adhere to the *Unity* of the GODHEAD.—Nay; in his last solemn Apology before his Judges, He publicly renounces the Truth; declares, that He worshipped those Gods, which were acknowledged by his Countrymen; worshipped them, and no other; on the same Festivals, at the same Altars, and in the same (*idolatrous*) Manner.—*No other*: these are his Words, Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔγνων αὐτὸς Διὸς, καὶ Ἡρας, καὶ τῶν συντεταγμένων Θεῶν, ἢ ὅσων τισὶ καίνοις Δαιμόσιν, ἢ ὅμοις, ἢ ἐνομαζομένων ἄλλος Θεὸς ἀναπέφνηα. *Socrat. Memor. L. I. c. i. Sect. 11, 24.*

Let none conclude, from this or any other Passage, That We would consign over all the Heathens to Damnation: This is as far from our Intention, as it is foreign to the Argument. We are only like Witnesses, summoned to give in our Evidence. From which it appears, that the very best among the *Gentiles*, were ignorant of the true GOD; or, if they knew Him, in any Degree, they glorified Him not as GOD; but became vain in their Imagination, and vile in their Worship.—Whether they shall obtain Mercy, or which of them shall be Objects of divine Clemency, is left solely to the Determination of their supreme, unerring, righteous JUDGE;

— Non nostrum est tantas componere Lites.

With reference to the *supreme Good*, they were equally at a loss.—There's not one among all the inferior Creatures; not even the crawling Worm, or the buzzing Fly; but perceives what is *beneficial*, and *pursues* it; discerns what is *pernicious*, and *avoids* it. The Caterpillar, whose Nourishment is from one particular Species of Vegetables, never makes a wrong Application to another: never is allured by the Fragrance of the Auricula, or dazzled by the Splendor of the Tulip; but constantly distinguishes, and as constantly adheres to the Leaf, which affords her the proper Food. So *sagacious* are the meanest Animals, with relation to their respective Happiness! While the most celebrated of the Heathen Sages were, on a Subject of the very same Import, mere *Dotards*.—*Varro* reckons up no less than two hundred and eighty-eight different Opinions, concerning the true Good; and not one of them derives it from the true Source, I mean a Conformity to the ever-blessed GOD, and an Enjoyment of his infinite Perfections.

If, on these *leading* Points, they were so erroneous; no Wonder, that they were bewildered in their other Researches.

Ther. We are not inquiring into the Circumstances of this or that particular Nation; but into the State of Mankind in general.

Asp. Cast your Eye, *Theron*, upon those Swallows. They shoot themselves, with surprising Rapidity, through the Air. I should take them for so many living Arrows, were it not for their shifting, winding, wanton Motions.—Are not these what You call *Birds of Passage*?

Ther. These, and some other of the feathered Race, are our constant Visitants in Summer; but leave Us, at the Approach of Winter. As soon as the Weather becomes cold, they assemble themselves in a Body; and concert Measures, for their Departure. *Who* convenes the Assembly—*What* Debates arise—*Or how* they communicate the Resolution taken—I do not presume to say. This is certain, that not one of them dislodges, till the Affair is settled, and the Proclamation has been published. Not a single Loiterer is to be seen, when the Troops are preparing for their Decampment; nor a single Straggler to be found, when they have once begun their March.—Having finished their Journey through the Land, their Wings become a sort of Sails*; and they launch, not into, but over the Ocean. Without any *Compass*, to regulate their Course; or any *Chart*, to make Observations in their Voyage; they arrive safely at the desired Shore. And what is still more extraordinary, they always

* *Ramigio Marum.*

Virg.

ways find the readiest Way, and the shortest Cut.

Ass. The Stork in the Heavens knoweth her appointed Times: and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow, observe the Time of their Coming: but my People know not the Judgment of their GOD*. The young Ones of those Birds perceive, how absolutely necessary it is, to forsake the Land of their Nativity, and travel in quest of milder Climes.—But our Offspring, even when their Minds begin to open, are brutish in their Knowledge†. Born they are, and too long continue, like the wild Ass's Colt‡. Not only quite destitute of heavenly Wisdom, but stupid to apprehend it, and averse to receive it. As soon as they are born, they go astray, and—

Ther. Go astray—To what is this owing, but to the bad Examples they behold? They catch the wayward Habit, from the irregular Conversation of others.

Ass.

* Jer. viii. 7.

† Jer. x. 14.

‡ Job ix. 12. How keenly is this Comparison pointed!—Like the Ass's, an Animal remarkable for its Stupidity, even to a Proverb.—Like the Ass's Colt, which must be still more egregiously stupid than the Dam.—Like the wild Ass's Colt, which is not only blockish, but stubborn and refractory; neither has valuable Qualities by Nature, nor will easily receive them by Discipline.—The Image, in the Original, is yet more strongly touched. The comparative Particle *like* is not in the Hebrew; *born a wild Ass's Colt*; or, as We should say in English, *a mere wild, &c.*

Asp. Is not this a Confirmation of my Point? Why are they *yielding* Clay to each bad Impression? *Case-hardened* Steel to every edifying Application?—From imitating unworthy Examples, You can hardly with-hold them, by the tightest Rein. But, if You would affect them with a Sense of divine Things, or bring them acquainted with GOD their Maker, *Line must be upon Line, Line upon Line: Precept must be upon Precept, Precept upon Precept: Here a little, and there a little**.—What farther corroborates my Sentiment, is, That all these tender Toils of Erudition, are generally unwelcome; are too often unsuccessful; nay, will always be ineffectual, without the Concurrence of almighty Grace.

Besides, *Theron*, if this Propensity to Evil be observable in *all* Children, it seems more than probable, that the unhappy Bias is derived from their Parents, rather than caught from their Neighbours; and owing, not to the

* A great Critic has laid down the following Rule, to be observed in fine Writing;

*'Tis not enough no Harshness gives Offence,
The Sound must be an Echo to the Sense.*

Pope's Essay on Criticism.

Never was this delicate Maxim more nicely exemplified, than in the above-cited Passage of *Isaiah*. Chap. xxviii. 13.—Another Instance of the same kind occurs in the seventh Verse. Where the Language seems to mimic the *reeling, staggering, giddy* Motions of a Drunkard: while it iterates and reiterates the Idea; expresses the same Thing, in a different and still different Manner; with an apparent, and, in this Case, a significant *Circumrotation* of Words.

DIALOGUE XIII. 245

the Influence of external Examples, but to a Principle of internal Corruption*.—Neglect the Education of Children, and You are sure to have their Manners evil, their Lives unprofitable. Nay, only remit your Endeavours, and they lose what has been gained : they start aside, like a broken Bow. And wherefore this ? Why do they not, without the Rules of Discipline or Lessons of Instruction, *spontaneously* addict themselves to the Exercise of every Virtue ? Just as the Cygnets, in yonder Canal, spontaneously take to the Element of Water, and the Act of Swimming.

That Bed, in the Garden before Us, will suggest the Reason. It has been digged and dressed, this very Day. It now lies smooth and clean. Not a single Weed appears on its Surface. Yet, how certainly will it, in a very little Time, produce a plenteous Growth of those vegetable Nuisances ?—Whence can this proceed ? No Hand will sow them. No Wish will invite them. But the *Seeds*, though unperceived by any Eye, are *already* there. Disseminated by the Winds, they have mixed themselves with the Mould, and are sunk into the Soil.—So, just so, it is with our Children.

The

* St. Paul confesses, that He and his Fellow-saints were, in their unconverted State, depraved : and this, not *διὰ τὴν ἐξίν*, by Use or Exercise, but *φύσιν*, by Nature. Eph. ii. 3.

The Seeds of Iniquity are *within* * them; and, unless proper Diligence be exerted by Us, unless kind Assistance be vouchsafed from Above, they will assuredly spring up; over-run their Souls; and dishonour their Lives.

Tber. Let Us leave the Children, and make *Men* the Subject of our Inquiry.

Assp. In this Respect, *Tberon*,

Men are but Children of a larger Growth.

We may leave the Vest or Hanging-sleeve Coat, but We shall still find the Follies of the Child. — In *Youth*, what low Ambition, and Fondness for despicable Pleasures. — In *Manhood*, what a keen Pursuit of transitory Wealth; yet what a cold Inattention to GOD and Holiness! — Men, and Men too of the greatest Abilities, whose Penetration on other Subjects, is piercing as the Eagle's Sight, are, on the most important Points, *blind* as the incaverned Mole.

Tber. What! is the Understanding like the most *dim-sighted* Animal, when lodged in her darkest

* Whoever chooses to examine the Seeds, the poisonous Seeds, that are lodged in this *Nursery* of all Evil, may see a Sample of them in our LORD's Description, *Mark* vii. 20, 21, 22, 23. Where He characterizes the Heart, not barely of the hypocritical Pharisee, or the abandoned Publican, but of Mankind in general. — After such an Authority, shall I mention the Testimony of *Sauca*? We are allowed to glean the Grapes, when the Vintage is gathered. In such a View I would introduce the *Philosopher* after the SAVIOUR. *Omnia in omnibus Vitia sunt; sed non omnia in Singulis extant.*

De Benef. Lib. IV.

darkest Retirement? That sublime Faculty of the Soul; which lends her Eye to all the rest, sits at the Helm, and directs their Motions!

Asp. You remember, I presume, that beautiful Passage in *Milton**; which Mr. *Addison* so highly admires, and so judiciously illustrates. The Passage I mean, where the Arch-Angel *Michael* comes down, to advertise *Adam* of future Events, and to execute the Sentence of divine Justice.

Ther. I remember it perfectly well.—In the East, the great Light of Day lies under an Eclipse. In the West, a bright Cloud descends; filled with a Host of Angels, and more luminous than the Sun itself. The whole Theatre of Nature is darkened, that this glorious Machine may appear in all its Magnificence and Beauty.—From this radiant Chariot, the *Potentate* of Heaven alights; and advances, with a majestic Stateliness, to meet *Adam*.

Asp. Should You see such an august Personage, alighting from such a splendid Chariot, and walking amidst the thronged Streets of a City?—Should You behold every One intent upon his Business or Diversions; struck with no *Awe*; paying no *reverential* Regard to this celestial Visitant; what would You think?

Ther.

* B. XI. 203, &c.

Ther. I should certainly suspect, That some superior Power had drawn a *Veil* over their Sight, and hid this wonderful Spectacle from their View.

Assp. Such is really the Case with all Mankind by Nature, and with the Generality of People, during their whole Life.—GOD, the infinitely great GOD, is in every Place. Yet how Few *advert* to his Presence!—All Nature exhibits Him to their Senses; yet, perhaps, He is not in any of their Thoughts.

The Sun, clothed in transcendent Brightness, most illustriously displays his MAKER's Glory. The Moon, though dressed in fainter Beams, has Lustre enough to shew Us the adorable DEITY, and his marvelous Perfections. The Stars, fixed as they are at an unmeasurable Distance, and *lessened* almost to a Point, come in with their Evidence, and *magnify* their CREATOR to a gazing but unaffected World.

The Air *whispers* his Clemency in the gentle, the refreshing Gales of Spring. If We take no Notice of this soft persuasive Address, the Tone is elevated; the Majesty of JEHOVAH *sounds aloud*, in roaring Winds, and rending Storms. Yet *both* Expedients fail. Man is like the deaf Adder, that stoppeth her Ears. He refuseth to hear the Voice of the Charmers, charm they never so sweetly, never so forcibly.

Each

Each Flower, arrayed in Beauty, and breathing Perfume, courts our Affections for its infinitely amiable AUTHOR.—Not a Bird that warbles, nor a Brook that murmurs, but invites our Praise, or chides our Ingratitude.—All the Classes of Fruits deposit their Attestation on our Palates, yet seldom reach our Hearts. They give Us a Proof of the divine Benignity; a Proof, as *undeniable* as it is pleasing, and too often as *ineffectual* also.

In short; the whole Creation is a kind of magnificent Embassy from its Almighty LORD; deputed to proclaim *his Excellencies*, and demand *our Homage*. Yet, who has not disregarded the former, and with-held the latter?—How Few walk, as seeing HIM that is invisible, or have Fellowship with the FATHER of Spirits? Though, to walk before Him, is our *biggest* Dignity; and to have Fellowship with Him, is our *only* Felicity?

Ther. This is owing to *Inattention*, rather than to any Inability in Man's Understanding. The many Works of Genius, which have been produced in various Ages, are an abundant Proof of his intellectual Capacity.—Have not the Seas been traversed, and the Skies measured? Has not the Earth been disemboweled of her choicest Treasures; while her Surface is beautified with Towns, Cities, Palaces, innumerable?—What fine Arts are invented and exercised;

exercised; and to what a Pitch of Perfection are they carried? Arts that seem, if not to exceed, at least to *rival* Nature.—It was the Understanding, that formed all these great Designs. It was the Understanding, that contrived the Means, and conducted the Execution.—And are not these unquestionable Evidences of her very superior Abilities?

Asp. Then she is like some great Empress, who conquers half the World, but is unable to rule *Herself*. Who extends her Regulations into foreign Climes, while her domestic Affairs are involved in Confusion.—Do You doubt the Reality of this Remark? Set Yourself to meditate upon the most interesting Truths. How *defultory*, how *incoherent* are your Thoughts?—Charge them to be collected. They disobey your Orders.—Rally the undisciplined Vagrants. Again they desert the Task.—Exert all your Power, and keep them close to their Business. Still they elude your Endeavours.

The other Day, I could not forbear smiling at a little Adventure of your youngest Son's. Some *Quicksilver*, that happened to be spilt upon the Floor, parted into several Globules. The shining Balls looked so prettily, he longed to make them his own. But when he offered to take them up, they slipt from his Hand. As often as he renewed the Attempt, so often He met with a Disappointment. The closer
He

He strove to grasp them, the more speedily they escaped from his Fingers. He seemed, at first, to be amazed; then became quite angry, that the little *Fugitives* should so constantly *baffle* his repeated Efforts.—Thus unmanageable I very often find my own Thoughts, If yours are under no better Regimen, this may convince Us both, that all is not according to the original Creation.

We apply Ourselves to converse with the everlasting GOD in *Prayer*. Here, One would expect to have the Thoughts all Clearness, and all Composure. But Here *We are not sufficient of Ourselves, to think any Thing as of Ourselves**. All those holy Ideas, which create Reverence, or strengthen Faith, or quicken Love, come from the FATHER of Lights. Should HE withdraw His Influence, all will be dull, and dark, and dead.—It may be, We are somewhat invivened in this sacred Exercise; before We are aware, perhaps in the very Midst of the solemn Office, our Attention is *dissipated*; and not dissipated only, but *scattered* to the Ends of the Earth. The GOD of all Glory is forsaken, and the Devotion paid to some senseless Foppery. A Malefactor, begging his Life at the Knees of his Sovereign; and discontinuing his Suit, in order to caress a *Lap-dog*, or pursue a *Butterfly*; is but a faint Image of

* 2 Cor. iii. 5.

of the Vanity, that attends our devotional Services.—Reason, which ought to correct these Irregularities, is treated like the incredulous Lord; who, instead of controuling the unruly Multitude, was overborne by their Impetuosity, and trodden under Foot *.

Since then the Reins are struck out of our Hands, and We have lost the Rule over our own Faculties; surely, We are in a State different, very different from our primitive Constitution.

Ther. However insensible to *refined* Speculation, the Understanding, when *Interest* is in the Case, is apprehensive enough.

Assp. In temporal †, not in spiritual Affairs.—Your younger Brother, *Theron*, is a Merchant. We will suppose Him at the Sea-side; within a small Distance of the Vessel, on which a considerable Part of his Substance is embarked.—We will suppose the Vessel in the utmost Distress; ready to founder with her Leaks, or to strike upon the Rocks.—If he discovers no Sign of Concern; calls in no Assistance from the Country; makes no Effort to *save* the Crew, and *secure* the Cargo; would You not think him bereaved of his Understanding, or deprived of his Sight?—Could You conceive a more favourable Opinion of his

* 2 Kings vii. 17.

† Called therefore by the Apostle, *Fleshly Wisdom*, and opposed to the Grace of GOD. 2 Cor. i. 12.

his Eyes or his Intellect? If, instead of trying every Method to prevent a Shipwreck, He should amuse Himself with picking *Shells* from the Ocean, or drawing *Figures* on the Sand?

We, and every One of our Fellow-creatures, have an Interest in Jeopardy, unspeakably more precious, than all the rich Lading of a thousand Fleets. Our Souls, our immortal Souls, are exposed, every Day, every Hour, to the Peril of *everlasting Destruction*. Every Temptation is threatening to their endless Welfare, as a Ridge of craggy Rocks to a Ship that drives before the strongest Gale.— Yet, how unconcerned are Mankind? Where is their holy Fear? Where their godly Jealousy? Where their wakeful Circumspection? Rather, what a *gay Insensibility* is observable in their Behaviour? Or else, what a *lifeless Formality* prevails in their Supplications? Their Supplications to that ALMIGHTY BEING, who alone is able to save and to destroy.— Was not the human Understanding both darkened and benumbed, We should see our Neighbours, We should feel Ourselves awakened, into much the same earnest Solicitude, as the Disciples expressed; when, perceiving the Waves boistrous, and their Bark sinking, they cried; LORD! *Save Us! We perish!*

But alas! in Things of an unseen Nature, though of eternal Consequence, *Interest*, that habitual

habitual Darling of every Heart, loses its engaging Influence. Nay; when Eternity, all-important Eternity is at stake, even *Self-preservation* is scarce any longer a governing Principle.—What can be more deplorable? And, if We admit not the Doctrine of original Corruption, what so unaccountable?

Ther. This, I must confess, is true, with regard to the unthinking Rabble. To them may be accommodated the Remark of *Augustus*. Who, when he saw some foreign Females, carrying Apes in their Arms instead of Infants, said to one of his Courtiers; “Have the Women of those Countries *no Children*, “that they are so fond of such despicable “Animals?”—The Vulgar are so immersed in secular Cares, that One might indeed be tempted to ask; “Have those People *no Souls*? “that Buying and Selling, Eating and Drinking, engross their whole Concern?”—But Persons of Rank and Education, think in a more exalted Manner.

Asp. Do you then imagine, that an Elevation of Circumstances sets the Affections on Things above? Or, that it is the peculiar Infelicity of the *Vulgar*, to grovel in their Desires?—Gold, I believe, is more likely to increase, than to dissipate the Fog on the Mind. Abundance of Possessions, instead of disengaging the Heart, fasten it more inseparably to the Earth.

Earth. Even superior Attainments in Learning, if not sanctified by Grace, serve only to render the Owner somewhat more refined in his Follies.—But Comparisons, between the various Classes of Mankind, are as useless as they are invidious. None, in either Condition, attend to the Things which make for their Peace, till they are *awakened* from their Lethargy, by the quickening SPIRIT of CHRIST. And even then We cannot but observe evident Indications of much *remaining* Blindness.

How apt are such Persons to mistake the Way of Salvation? To place their own Works for a Foundation of Hope, instead of CHRIST the Rock of Ages? Thinking, by their own Performances to *win*, not seeking from unmerited Grace to *receive*, the Inheritance of eternal Glory. Which is more absurdly vain, than to offer Toys as an Equivalent for Thrones; or to dream of purchasing Diadems with a Mite.—They are also prone to misapprehend the Nature of Holiness. Are zealous to regulate the *external* Conduct, without attending to the Renovation of the *Heart*: in outward Forms elaborate; with respect to inward Sanctity, less if at all exact. A Labour just as preposterous, as to skin over the Surface of a Wound, while it festers at the Bottom, and consumes the Bone.

Give

Give me leave to ask, *Theron*; When our LORD declares, *Unless a Man be born again, He cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven**: when He speaks of *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood*†: when You hear or read of *Union* with the blessed *JESUS*, or *Communion* with the most high *GOD*: is there not a Cloud, if not total Darknes, on your Mind‡? —How erroneous was the *Psalmist* himself, in his Judgment concerning the divine Disposals? *So foolish was I and ignorant, even as it were a Beast, or as the veriest Beast before Thee*||. —The Voice of Experience therefore will attest, what the Word of Revelation has averred; That *the natural Man*, be his intellectual Abilities ever so pregnant, or ever so improved, cannot

* *John* iii. 3.

† *John* vi. 54.

‡ With regard to the Mysteries of *CHRIST*, the greatest Proficients are but *Obtuse acuti*, Dull even in their Acuteness. —What says the wise *Agur*? An invaluable Fragment of whose Works, is preserved in the Book of *Proverbs*. *Surely, I am more brutish than any Man, and have not the Understanding of a Man*: even though the following Verses bespeak the very singular Elevation and Extent of his Knowledge. *Prov.* xxx. 2. —Conformably to the Experience of this excellent Man, I have always observed, that the more enlightened People are, the more they lament their Ignorance; the more they pant after a continual Progress in heavenly Knowledge; and pray for clearer, still clearer Manifestations of the incomprehensible *GOD*.

|| I question, whether *Aspasio's* Translation comes fully up to the Emphasis of the Original. The comparative Particle is omitted in the *Hebrew*. *As* softens and palliates the Matter. Therefore the *Psalmist*, to express the deepest Sense of his Ignorance, says, *I was a Blast, yea, the veriest Beast*, כהמות *Psalm* lxxiii. 22.

cannot know the Things of the SPIRIT of GOD:*

He has no Sight to discern their Beauty; no Taste to relish their Sweetness. Nay, though they are the purest Light, and the most perfect Wisdom, to Him they appear, not only dark and obscure, but even *Foolishness* itself.

Would this be the Case, if the Understanding was not greatly depraved? Should it be difficult for your Ear, to distinguish the Diversity of Sounds; or for your Eye, to discern the Variety of Colours; would You not conclude, that the Organs were very much *impaired*?

Ther. I think, You have treated the Understanding, as *Zopyrus* served his own Body †, when he went over to the Enemy.—Do You intend to mangle the other Faculties, at the same unmerciful Rate?

Asp. That Nobleman *made* the Wounds, which disfigured his Flesh. I have only *probed* the Sores, which were found in the Understanding. If I have touched the Quick, and put the Patient to Pain, it is only to facilitate the Operation of Medicine, and make way for a Cure.—But permit me to ask, Wherein does the Excellency of the human *Will* consist?

Ther.

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

† See *Rollin's Ancient Hist.* Vol. III. p. 46.

Ther. In following the Guidance of Reason, and submitting to the Influence of proper Authority.

Ass. The Will, I fear, rejects the Government of Reason; and it is undeniably certain, that it rebels against the Authority of GOD.

Cast your Eye upon that *Team* of *Horses*, with which yonder Countryman is ploughing his fallow Ground. No less than five of those robust Animals are linked together, and yield their submissive Necks to the Draught. They have more Strength than twenty Men, yet are managed by a *single Lad*. They not only stand in awe of the Lash, but listen to the Voice of their Driver. They turn to the Right-hand or to the Left; they quicken their Pace, or stop short in the Furrow; at the bare Intimation of his Pleasure.—Are *We* equally obedient to the Calls, to the Exhortations, the express Injunctions of our heavenly LORD? The blessed JESUS spoke at the Beginning, and the World was made. He speaks by his Providence, and the Universe is upheld. When He shall speak at the last Day, the Heavens will pass away, and the Earth be dissolved. Yet He speaks to Us in his divine Word, and We turn a deaf Ear to his Address. He speaks in tender Expostulations, and no Melting of Heart ensues. He speaks in precious Promises, and no ardent Desires are inkindled.—The Will,

Will, which, in these Cases, ought to be turned as *Wax* to the *Seal*, is unimpressed and inflexible as an *iron Sinew*.

Ther. The human Will is constantly inclined to preserve, accommodate, and make its Possessor happy. Is not this the right *Position*, in which it should always stand? Or the most desirable *Direction*, that can be given to its Motions?

Ass. I should be glad, if Fact bore witness to your Assertion. But Fact, I apprehend, is on the contrary Side.—I took notice, as we came along, of some *Ants* busily employed on a little Hillock. Have You made any Observations, *Theron*, on this reptile Community?

Ther. It is a little *Republic* *. They inhabit a Kind of oblong City, divided into various Streets. They are governed by Laws, and regulated by Politics, of their own. Their Magazines are commodiously formed, and judiciously guarded against the Injuries of the Weather. Some are defended by an Arch made of Earth, and cemented with a peculiar Sort of Glue. Some are covered with Rafter of slender Wood, and thatched with Rushes or Grass. The Roof is always raised with a double Slope, to turn away the Current of the Waters, and shoot the Rain from their Store-houses. They all *bestir* themselves, with in-

R 2

cessant

* See *Nat. Displ.* Vol. I.

cessant Assiduity, while the Air is serene; while the Roads are good; and Abundance of loose Grain lies scattered over the Fields.—By these Precautions, they live secure, when Storms embroil the Sky; they want no Manner of Conveniency, even when Winter lays waste the Plains.

Ass. Do *We* improve, so diligently, our present Opportunities? This Life is the Seed-time of Eternity. Do *We* husband the precious Moments, like Persons sensible of their unspeakable Importance? Sensible, that if *We* trifle and are indolent, *they* will be irrecoverably gone, and *We* irretrievably ruined.

Sickness, *We* know not how soon, may invade *Us*, Pain may torment *Us*, and both may issue in our final Dissolution. Are *We* duly aware of these awful Changes, and properly solicitous to put all in order for their Approach?—*We* walk (alarming Thought!) upon the very Brink of Death, Resurrection, and Judgment. Do *We* walk like *wise Virgins*, with our Loins girt; with our Lamps trimmed; in a State of continual Readiness, for the HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM's Advent?

Those Ants *have no Guide, Overseer, or Ruler. Yet they prepare their Meat in the Summer, and gather their Food in the Harvest* *. *We* have all

*. *Prov. viii. 7.*

all these, yet neglect the Time of our Visitation.—We have GOD's unerring Word, to guide Us; GOD's ever-watchful Eye, to oversee Us; GOD's sovereign Command, to rule and quicken Us. Notwithstanding all these Motives, is not the Speech of the Sluggard, the very Language of our Conduct? *A little more Sleep, a little more Slumber, a little more Folding of the Hands to sleep* *. The most supine Indifference, where all possible Diligence is but just sufficient!—This, You must allow, is the true Character of Mankind in general. And does this demonstrate the *Rectitude* of their Will.

Tber. The Understanding may be said to carry the Torch, the Will to hold the Balance. Now, the Perfection of a Balance consists, in being so nicely poised, as to incline at the *least Touch*, and preponderate with the *slightest Weight*.

* There is, if I mistake not, a very nice Gradation, in this Speech of the Sluggard; such as very naturally *mimics* the Manner of that lazy Creature.—He pleads, first, for some considerable Degree of Indulgence, *A little Sleep*.—If that is too much to be granted, He craves some smaller Toleration of his Sloth; *A little Slumber*.—If the Task-master still rings in his Ear, still goads his Side; one almost sees him, rubbing his heavy Eyes, and yawning out his last Request; *A little Folding of the Hands at least to lie down*, חֲבֵק יָדָיו לִשְׁכֹּב, Prov. vi. 11.—When such is our Conduct with regard to *eternal* Interests, how justly may We apply that spirited Expostulation of the Poet;

Tantamvis Rom tam negligenter!

Weight. This Property belongs, without all Dispute, to the human Will.

Ass. What? If one of your Scales should descend to the Ground, though charged with Trifles, that are light as Air? If the other should kick the Beam, though its Contents be weightier, than Talents of Gold?—Is not this an exact Representation of our Will, when the *fleeting* Pleasures of Sense, or the *poor* Interests of Time, excite our Wishes; even while the solid Delights of Religion, and the immensely rich Treasures of Immortality, can hardly obtain our Attention?—However, let Us quit the Metaphor, and examine Fact, Suppose, I make it appear, that, instead of choosing the most eligible Objects, the Will is so deplorably vitiated, as to *loath* what is salutary, and be *fond* of what is baneful.

Ther. If You prove this to be universally the Case, You will prove your favourite Point with a witness.

Ass. When PROVIDENCE is pleased to thwart our Measures, or defeat our Endeavours; to bring Us under the Cloud of Disgrace, or lay upon Us the Rod of Affliction; how are We affected?—Do We bow our Heads in *humble* Resignation? Do We open our Mouths in *thankful* Acknowledgments?—Observe the Waters in that elegant octangular Basin, They assimilate themselves, with the
utmost

utmost Readiness, and with equal Exactness, to the Vessel that contains them. So would the human Will, if it were not extremely forward and foolish, conform itself to the divine: which is unerringly wise, irreproachably good, and, of all possible Contingencies, incomparably the best*.—Yet, how apt are We to fret with Disquietude; and struggle under afflictive Dispensations, *as a wild Bull in a Net!*

Ther. This is a very imperfect Proof, *Aspassio*, and corresponds only with Part of your Accusation. We may dislike what is wholesome, especially if it be unpalatable, yet not be fond of our Bane.

Asp. Should You see a Person, who thirsts after the putrid Lake, but disrelishes the running Fountain; who longs for the *impoisoned* Berries of the Nightshade, but abhors the *delicious* Fruit of the Orchard, would You applaud the Regularity of his Appetite?—I don't wait

* This seems to be the Meaning of the Prophet, *אֵלֶּיךָ לָצִדִּיק מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל* *Isai. xxvi. 7.* Not—*The Way of the Just is Uprightness*—This is a Sense, scarcely consistent with Humility; and by no means proper, to introduce a devotional Address to the great JEHOVAH. Rather—*GOD's Way to the Just is Uprightness*; or, still more emphatically, *Uprightnesses*. Is in all Respects irreprovable, excellent, admirable; suited to his sacred Attributes of Wisdom, Goodness, and Truth. Every Circumstance, however it may seem neglected or irregular to the carnal Eye, is ordered in *Number, Weight, and Measure*.

wait for your Answer. But I more than suspect, this is a true Picture of all unregenerate People. How do they affect Dress and external Ornament; but are unwilling, rather than desirous, to be *clothed with Humility**, or to *put on CHRIST*†! Amusement will engage, Play animate, and Diversion fire them; but as to the Worship of the living GOD, O! *what a Weariness is it*‡! This is attended, if attended at all, with Languor, and a listless Insensibility. Frothy Novels, and flatulent Wit, regale their Taste; while the Marrow and Fatness of the divine Word, are “as their sorrowful Meat ||.” What is all this but to loath the Salutory, and long § for the Baneful?

Let

* 1 Pet. v. 5.

† Rom. xiii. 14.

‡ Mal. i. 13.

|| Job vi. 7.

§ The Reader may see this unhappy Contrast drawn in the strongest Colours, by the royal Preacher, and by the mourning Prophet.—*Because I have called, and Ye refused; I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded: But ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof.* What a Croud of Words! Emphatically declaring the most incorrigible Perverseness; which is Proof against every Method of Reformation; against all the Arts even of divine Persuasion. Prov. i. 22, 23.—*The Host of Heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and whom they have worshipped.* What a Heap of Expressions! Significantly describing that impetuous Ardour, which no Prohibitions can restrain; and that insatiable Avidity, which never knows when to say, “It is enough.” Jer. viii. 2.

If I beg Leave to add another Example of this kind, it is chiefly for the sake of clearing up an obscure Passage in the *Psalms*;

DIALOGUE XIII. 265

Let me, from the same Comparison, propose one Question more; which may be applicable both to the Will and to the Understanding.—Should You hear of another Person, the State of whose Stomach was so disposed, that it turned the most nourishing Food into Phlegm; and derived Matter of *Disease*, from the most sovereign Supports of *Health*; what would You think of his Constitution?

Ther. I should certainly think it very much distempered.

Ass. Without the Grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, our Souls turn every Occurrence into an Increase of their sinful Depravity. Our very Table is a Snare; and instead of exciting Us to Gratitude, is a Provocative to Gluttony.—How difficult is it, when We flow in Plenty, not to be elated; when We are pressed with Poverty, not to repine!—Have We Business in the World? It
cumbers

Psalms; which seems to have been mistaken by the Authors of both our Versions.—*David*, to set forth the barbarous Affiduity of his Persecutors, says; *They wander up and down*, They pry into every Corner; they search the City, and examine the Country; *לֹא לֶחֶם* not for Meat; which, in this Connection, gives a very jejune Sense, and quite foreign to the Subject: but *to devour*. To devour me the destined Victim of their Rage. *And if they are not satisfied*, if they cannot compass their Design by Day, *לַיְלָה יִגְדָּלּוּ* they will grudge? No; but *they will continue all Night*, in the Prosecution of their Purpose. Neither Cold nor Darkness can retard them; neither Hardships nor Dangers can divert them; but their Attempts are as *undefigable*, as their Malice is *implacable*, Psalm lix. 16.

cumbers our Thoughts, or tempts Us to Avarice. Have We no Business to manage? We sink into Sloth, and settle on the Lees of Voluptuousness.—If our Schemes are prosperous, it is odds but they attach Us to the Interests of Time. If they prove unsuccessful, We too often are chagrined with the Disappointment, and sin against Meekness.—Even the holy Commandment, instead of restraining Sin, or producing Obedience, irritates the inbred Depravity; and renders it more restless, more impetuous, more ungovernable*.—So that *the Things which should have been for our Welfare* (so raging and very malignant is our Corruption!) *are converted into an Occasion of falling.*

Tber. The Will is under no Necessity of misemploying her Powers. She is free to act in this Manner or in that. And, if a Spendthrift, is not a Slave.

Asp. In Actions, that relate to the animal Oeconomy, the Will is unquestionably free. She can contract the Forehead into a Frown, or expand it with a Smile.—In the ordinary Affairs of Life, She is under no Controul. We can undertake or decline a Journey, carry on or discontinue an Employ, just as We please.—In the outward Acts of Religion also, the Will is her own Mistress. We can read
the

* Rom. vii. 5.

the Word of GOD, or go to the Place of divine Worship, without any extraordinary Aid from above.—But in Matters that are more intimately connected with our Salvation, the Case is different. Here, as our Liturgy expresses it, “We are *tied and bound* with the “Chain of our Sins.”

—Would You have a Person delight Himself in the LORD; take pleasure in Devotion; set his Affections on Things above?—All this is both his Duty and his Happiness. But alas! His Will is in the Condition of that distressed Woman, who was *bowed down with a Spirit of Infirmity, and could in no wise lift up Herself**, Corruption, like a strong Bias, or rather like a heavy Mountain, presses down his Mind. Neither can He shake off the Propensity, or struggle away from the Load; until Grace, almighty Grace, interposes for his Release.—Where the SPIRIT of the LORD is, there and there alone is Liberty†; that sacred and glorious Liberty, which is not the common Privilege of all Men, but the high Prerogative of the Children of GOD.

Would You have a Person apply to the great REDEEMER: apply with a real Ardour of Desire; like blind *Bartimæus*, or the *Syrophœnician Mother*?—His Will is like the withered Arm;

* Luke xiii. 11.

† 2 Cor. iii. 13.

Arm: cannot stretch forth itself to the all-gracious SAVIOUR: cannot hunger and thirst after his everlasting Righteousness and infinite Merit: till the SAVIOUR Himself speaks Power into the *infeebled*, the *perverted* Faculty. — If You think otherwise, try the Experiment. Persuade Men to this necessary Practice. Urge the most weighty Arguments: devise the most pathetic Expostulations: let Zeal summon all her Force, and Rhetoric employ all her Art. Without being a Prophet, I dare venture to foretel the Issue. Disappointments, repeated Disappointments, will convince You, that our divine MASTER knew what He said, When He solemnly declared; *No Man can come to Me, except the FATHER, which hath sent me, draw Him* *. — Our Church, in Conformity to this and other Scriptures, has taught Us to pray; *Turn Thou Us, O good LORD,* for nothing but thy omnipotent Agency is capable of doing it; *and so shall We be turned.*

Ther. Are We Slaves then? Will Christianity send Us to seek our Brethren, in the Mines or in the Gallies?

Assp.

* *John vi. 44.* It is not said, The FATHER *drives*, but *draws*: not by violent, irrational, compulsive Means; but by clear Conviction, sweet Persuasion, and Inducements suited to a reasonable Being. *These* are the Cords of a Beast, *these* of a Man. So that We are not acted upon as Clock-work, or influenced as mere Machines, but *made willing* in the Day of his Power, *Psal. cx. 3.*

Asp. Christianity does not *send*, but *find* Us there. There, or in a worse Slavery*.—It is doubtless a most abject State, to wear the Yoke, and truckle in Chains. Yet such, I apprehend, is the State of our Minds by Nature. To prove this, We need not go down to the lowest Ranks of Life. *These*, You might say with the Prophet, *are poor; these are foolish; they have not known the Way of the LORD, nor the Judgment of their GOD.—I will get me therefore to the great Men†, and examine their Disposition.*

Have You not known Persons of the greatest Intrepidity, and firmest Resolution, hurried away by their Lusts, as “a rolling Thing before the Whirlwind ‡?” Perhaps, they were hardy enough, with *Scævola*, to hold a Right-hand

* St. Paul says of *Christians*, and reckons Himself in the Number, that naturally they *served* (not *διακονούσας*, but *δουλοῦσας*, were absolute Slaves to) *divers Lusts and Pleasures*. Tit. iii. 3. The whole Verse is very remarkable, and nothing can be more apposite to *Aspasio's* Purpose. It shews Us, What *They* were by Nature, who through Grace were living Images of the blessed GOD.

This mortifying Doctrine is often acknowledged by our Church. Thus begins one of her public Supplications; *Almighty GOD, who alone canst order the unruly Wills and Affections of sinful Man.* It seems, We cannot determine our own Wills, nor regulate our own Affections. What is this but Bondage?—And to whom can these Expressions, *παραδεδωμένοι ὑπο τὴν ἀμαρτίαν*, *Sold under Sin*; *νόμον αἰχμαλωτίζουσα*, *A Law bringing into Captivity*; *τίς με ρυτῆται*; *Who shall deliver me?* To whom can these belong? Not to GOD's Freemen, but to the Devil's Vassals. *Rom. viii. 14, 23, 24.*

† *Jer. v. 4, 5.*

‡ *Isai. xvii. 13.*

hand in the Fire. Yet, were no more able to withstand the wanton Allurements of Beauty, or the soft Sollicitations of Pleasure; than the *Moth* can forbear fluttering about the Flame, even though it singes her Wings, and is scorching her to death.—Others, possessed of a refined Imagination, disdain the gross Indulgencies of Sensuality; yet are Slaves to their own *domineering* Passions. They are blown in to the most intemperate Rage, and pushed on to the most extravagant Actions, by every little ruffling Accident. They see the *Mean-ness*, which such an ungovernable Spirit argues: they feel the *Misery*, which such internal Tempests create: nay, they resolve to suppress the Impetuosity of their Temper: yet, are bore away by the Torrent; and, upon the very first Provocation, are as furiously resentful as ever.—Will You call *these* Persons free, because their Task-masters and their Tyrants are lodged within *? Because the Fetters are forged, not for the meaner, but for the immortal Part of their Nature?

Ther. Let Us pass to the *Affections*. These are to the Soul, what Wings are to the Eagle, or Sails to the Ship. These always stand ready to

Inordinate Desires
And upstart Passions catch the Government
From Reason, and to Servitude reduce
Man, till then free.

Milt.

to receive the Gales of Interest, and to spring at the Signal of Reason.

Asp. O! that they did!—But, if the Wings are clogged with Mire; if the Sails are disproportioned to the Ballast; what Advantage will accrue, either to the Animal, or to the Vessel?—The One will, probably, be over-set in the Voyage; the Other will lie groveling on the Ground.

Ther. *Desire* seems to be the first, that “opens the Mouth, or moves the Wing, or “peeps *.” *Desire* is active as a Flame, and ever in Pursuit of Happiness.

Asp. What if your Flame, instead of shooting upwards, should point its *inverted* Spires to the Earth? Would not this be strange, and a Sign of great Disorder?—GOD is the Center of Perfection, and the Source of Felicity. All that is amiable in itself, is comprehended in GOD. All that is beneficial to Us, proceeds from GOD. Do our Desires uniformly *tend* to this super-excellent Being? Do our Wishes *terminate* in the Enjoyment of his ever-glorious Majesty? Alas! We are naturally estranged from Him: We covet no Communion with Him. We are wedded to Trifles, and dote upon Vanity; but *to GOD we say—* it is evidently the Language of our Conduct—

Depart

* *Isaiab* x. 14.

Depart from Us; We desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways *.

If Desire is the First-born among the Affections, observe it in Children. There it appears in its Dawn, and has most of pure Nature.—See, how nimbly those *Flies*, exulting in the sunny Gleam, vibrate their active † Wings. So prompt and expedite are the Desires of Children to any corrupting Diversion.—See, how sluggishly that *Snail*, crawling forth amidst the refreshing Moisture, drags her slow Length along. So dull, if not reluctant, are the Dispositions of our Children, to any improving Exercise. Rewards will hardly win them to the Latter; the Rod can hardly deter them from the Former.

Is our *Love* under better Regulation?—How easily are We captivated with a fair Complexion and graceful Form; especially, when set off with the Decorations of Dress. But how little affected with the Beauty of internal Character; with the Ornaments of Virtue, and the Graces of *Christianity*? Can it be supposed, that the Pulse of the Soul beats regularly; when there is such a *passionate Fondness* for

* Job xxi. 14.

† The Wings of a Fly are supposed to have the *quickest* Motion, of any material Substance that lives. And if they make, as Naturalists inform us, some Hundreds of Vibrations in a Second of Time, I think, there can be no Competition in the Case.

for fading Embellishments, and such a *cold Indifference* for the most substantial Endowments?—How ready are We to be enamoured with well-proportioned Clay; often to our apparent Prejudice; sometimes to our utter Ruin! Yet how backward to love that infinitely loving and lovely REDEEMER, who would die Himself, rather than We should fall a Prey to Death! Tinder We are, perfect Tinder to the Sparks of irrational and dissolute Affection. Harder than Adamant, colder than Ice, to this heavenly Flame.

Ther. If our Love is blind, our *Fear* has not lost her Eyes. Fear is quick of Apprehension; and, instead of being stupidly insensible, is ready to “rise up at the Voice of “a Bird*.”

Ass. The Passion of Fear is sufficiently active, but deplorably *misapplied*.—We fear the Reproach of Men. But are We alarmed at the View of that *everlasting Shame*, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall pour upon the Ungodly? We shudder at the drawn Dagger, and stand appalled at the headlong Precipice. But how often have We defied the Sword of almighty Vengeance, and sported upon the Brink of irretrievable Perdition?

Sin is the most pernicious of all Evils. *Sin* violates the divine Command, and provokes

VOL. II.

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* *Eccles. xii. 4.*

the divine MAJESTY. Sin offers Despite to the blessed SPIRIT, and tramples upon the Blood of JESUS. For Sin, the Transgressor is banished from the blissful Presence of GOD, and doomed to dwell with inextinguishable Burnings. Do We dread this *grand Destroyer* of our Happiness? Dread it more than any Calamities, more than all Plagues?—Take one of those fine May-dukes, which glow with so beautiful a Scarlet on yonder Espalier. Offer it to the *Blackbird*, that serenades us from the neighbouring Elm. The Creature, though fond of the Dainty, will fly from your Hand, as hastily as from a leveled Fowling-piece. He suspects a Design upon his Liberty; and therefore will endure any Extremity, will even starve to death, rather than taste the *most tempting* Delicacy in such hazardous Circumstances.—Are We equally fearful of an infinitely greater Danger? Do We fly, with equal Solitude*, from the delusive but destructive Wiles of Sin? Alas! Do not We too often *swallow* the Bait, even when We plainly discover the fatal Hook? Do We not *snatch* the forbidden Fruit, though Conscience remonstrates; though GOD prohibits; though Death eternal threatens!

Ther.

* The *instigating* Admonition, transmitted to *Brentius* by an anonymous Letter, when the Papists had formed a Plot against his Life, should be the Rule of our Conduct on such an Occasion; *Fuge! Fuge! cito—citius—citissimè.*

Ther. Conscience then, according to your own Account, has escaped the general Shipwreck. Conscience is GOD's Vicegerent in the Soul, and executes her Office faithfully. Even the Gentiles *show the Work of the Law written in their Hearts; their Conscience also bearing witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another* *.

Asp. If there be any Remains of the divine Image, perhaps, they are to be found in the Conscience. But even this is not exempt from the common Ruin.—Consider its *Light*. It is like a dim Taper, feebly glimmering; and serving only to make the Darkness visible. Or, if it discovers any Thing, it is an obscure Something. We know not what. Which, instead of informing, tantalizes Us; and instead of guiding, bewilders Us. As false and delusory Lights on the Shore, put a Cheat upon the Mariner, and lead Him on to Ruin †.—Consider its *Operations*. It is either dumb, or dead, or both. *Dumb*; or else how vehemently

* *Rom. ii. 15.* Methinks I would not translate the Word *palat* the mean while, but *alternately* or *interchangeably* accusing or excusing; sometimes one, sometimes the other; in Conformity to the different Circumstances of their Temper and Behaviour.

† This seems to have been the Case with the Bulk of the *Heathen World*.—Conscience arraigned, and found them guilty. This put them upon practising their *abominable*, sometimes their *inhuman* Idolatries.—Nay, this induced them to give the most scandalous and impious Misrepresentations

mently would it upbraid Us, for our shocking Ingratitude to the Supreme Omnipotent BENEFACITOR? How loudly would it inveigh against our stupid Neglect of spiritual Interests, and eternal Ages? *Dead*; otherwise how keenly would it smart, when gashed with Wounds—*numerous*, as our repeated Violations of the divine Law—*deep*, as the horrid Aggravations of our various Iniquities.

Ther. Do You call this an Answer to my Objection, *Aspasio*? If it be an Answer, it resembles, in Point of satisfactory Evidence, the Light which You ascribe unto the Conscience.

Asp. The *Gentiles*, You alledge, shew the *Work*, but not the *Love* of the Law, written on their Hearts. Some leading Notices of Right and Wrong they have: some speculative Strictures of Good and Evil. But without a *real Abhorrence* of the One, or a *cordial Delight* in the Other. Which, far from ennobling their Nature, far from vindicating their Practice, argues the exceeding Depravity of the former, and renders the latter absolutely without Excuse.

No; You say, Conscience *excuses* the Heathens. Rather *makes some weak Apology* * for their

of the DEITY. That they might *feath* the Sting of Conscience, and find some *Salvo* for their own Iniquities, they made even the Objects of their Worship, the *Patrons* and the *Precedents* of their favourite Vices.

* The Word is *απολογισμὸν*.

their Conduct. This is far from acquitting, far from justifying them.—Besides, these weak Attempts to excuse, are always founded on *Ignorance*. Did they know themselves, their Duty, or their GOD, Conscience would, without the least Hesitation, bring in her Verdict, *Guilty*.—The Apostle assures Us, that, till Faith, which is a divine Principle, takes place in our Breasts, *both the Mind and Conscience are defiled* *. Here, and elsewhere, very plainly intimating; that the Conscience is evil, and ever will be evil, till it is *sprinkled with the Blood of CHRIST* †.

It *accuses* some, I acknowledge; and it ought to accuse, yea, to condemn All. But even Here it evidences itself to be corrupt. For, its Accusations are sometimes *erroneous* ‡, and no better than false Witness; sometimes *partial* ||, and suborned by Appetite; and very, very often *ineffectual*.—Nay, when they do take

* Tit. i. 14.

† Heb. x. 22.

‡ What else was that grand Article in the Accusations of Conscience, mentioned, with such particular Distinction, by *Virgil*;

—— *Pblegasque miserrimus omnes
Admonet, & magnâ testatur Voce per Umbras,
Discite Justitiam moniti, & non temnere Divos.*

For Men to *despise* such dunghil, worse than dunghil Deities, had been their *Virtue* if done, and was their *Duty* to do.—What else was that Voice of Conscience, mentioned by our LORD, *John* xvi. 2. or that, confessed by the Apostle, *Acts* xxvi. 9.

|| Otherwise, how could the most celebrated among the ancient Heroes applaud and practise, that execrable unnatural

take Effect, they produce no Fruit that is truly good. They work not a genuine Humiliation, or an unfeigned Repentance, but either a slavish Dread of GOD, as a severe Judge; or Hatred of Him, as an inexorable Enemy.

Ther. Hatred of GOD—Astonishing Impiety! Is it possible for the human Heart to admit such horrible Wickedness?

Asp. You may well be astonished, *Theron*; and GOD may justly expostulate; *What Iniquity have my People found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after Vanity*?*

“ I created You out of Nothing, and made
 “ You after my own Image. As a Father,
 “ I have provided for You. As a Nurse, I
 “ have cherished You.—I have given You the
 “ Earth, and the Fulness thereof, for your
 “ Possession. All my Creatures do You Service,
 “ and even my Angels minister unto
 “ your Good.—Do You desire greater Demonstrations
 “ of my Love? I have given
 “ what was dearer to me than all Angels,
 “ than all Worlds. I have given my SON
 “ from my Bosom, to die in your Stead.—
 “ Would You have farther Evidences of my
 “ tender Regard? Behold! I stoop from my
 “ exalted Throne; and *reason with, expostulate,*
 “ yea,

tural Crime, *Self-Murder*? How could they almost consecrate, that diabolical Principle of Action, *Pride*; and not have so much as a Name for that amiable Virtue, *Humility*?

* *Jer. xi. 5.*

“ yea, even *befeech* rebellious Worms.—I touch
 “ the Mountains, and they smoke : I look
 “ upon the Earth, and it trembles : I cast
 “ even the Princes of Heaven, when they
 “ break my Law, into Chains of Darknefs.
 “ But to You, O Men, though injured and
 “ affronted, I condescend to act as a Suppli-
 “ cant. I beseech You to be reconciled, and
 “ not to reject your own Mercies.”

Unparalleled, stupendous, ravishing Benig-
 nity!—To hate * *such* a GOD, is indeed the
 most detestable Impiety. Yet Man, foolish
 Man, practises this Impiety, whenever, for
 the Sake of a vile Lust, an ignoble Pleasure,
 or an unruly Passion, He transgresses the Com-
 mand of his CREATOR.

Shall I exemplify the Doctrine, in another
 of the Affections?

Ther. In Truth, *Aspasio*, I begin to be sick
 of the Subject. If human Nature is so ulce-
 rated, the less You touch it the better.—How-
 ever, let us not quite omit the *irascible* Appe-
 tite.

Ass. Of this We have already taken a Side-
 view ; if You choose to see it in fuller Pro-
 portion,

* Hatred of GOD is so *shocking* an Expression, that one
 would almost wish, never to hear or read it. But it occurs in
 our unerring Book, and is too often exemplified in human
 Life. See *Rom.* i. 30. *Exod.* xx. 5. *John* xv. 25.

portion, make your Observation on *Fervidus*. — *Fervidus* comes home in a Rage. His Cheeks are pale, and his Lips quiver, with Excess of Passion. Though He can hardly speak, He vows Revenge, and utters Imprecations. — What is the Cause of all this wondrous Ferment? A Neighbour, it seems, has dropt some reflecting Hint, or a Servant has blundered in some trifling Message. Such Usage, *Fervidus* says, is intolerable; and such Negligence unpardonable. — This same *Fervidus* has offered numberless Affronts to his MAKER; He has most scandalously neglected the Will of his Almighty LORD; yet feels no Indignation against *Himself*. — He is all Fury, when his own Credit is touched. But when the Interest of *CHRIST* is wounded, He can sit unconcerned, or pass it off with a Laugh. — Anger, I acknowledge, is sometimes becoming and useful. But is *this* its right Temperature? *This* its proper Application?

Ther. This is the Practice only of some few turbulent Spirits. To saddle *their* Qualities upon *every* Person, is a Procedure just as equitable, as the Madman's * Calculation was rational; who took an Account of every Ship, that entered the Harbour, and set it down for his own.

Asp.

* *Thrasylus*, an *Athenian*.

Ass. The latter Part of my Charge, I fear, is applicable to more than a few.—However, let Us consider the most *calm* and *sedate* Minds. How are they affected under Injuries? Do they never aggravate Failings into Crimes? Do they find it easy to abstain from every Emotion of Ill-will? Easy to love their Enemies, and do Good to them that hate them? These godlike Tempers, if our Nature was not degenerated, would be the *spontaneous* Produce of the Soul. But now, alas! they are not raised, without much Difficulty; seldom come to any considerable Degree of Eminence; never arrive at a State of true Perfection. An undoubted Proof, that they are *Exotics*, not *Natives* of the Soil.

Now We are speaking of Plants, cast your Eye upon the Kitchen-garden. Many of those Herbs, will perfume the *bard* Hand, that crushes them; and embalm the *rude* Foot, that tramples on them. Such was the benign Conduct of our LORD. He always overcame Evil with Good. When his Disciples disregarded Him, in his bitter Agony, He made the *kindest* Excuse for their ungrateful Stupidity*. When his Enemies, with unparalelled Barbarity, spilt his very Blood; He *pleaded* their Ignorance, as an Extenuation of their Guilt†.—Is the same Spirit in Us, which was also

* *Matt.* xxvi. 41.

† *Luke* xxiii. 34.

also in our divine MASTER? Then are our Passions rightly poised, and duly tempered. But if Resentment kindles, and Animosity rankles in our Hearts; this is an infallible Sign, that We swerve from our SAVIOUR's Pattern; consequently, are fallen from our primitive Rectitude.

Ther. What say You of the *Fancy*? This sure, if no other, retains the primitive Rectitude. What Pictures does she form, and what Excursions does she make? She can dive to the Bottom of the Ocean; can soar to the Height of the Stars; and walk upon the Boundaries of Creation.

Assp. That the *Fancy* is lively and excursive, I readily grant. It can out-travel the Post, or out-fly the Eagle. But if it travel, only to pick *Shells*; or fly abroad, to bring home *Mischief*; then, I apprehend, though You should admire the Faculty, You will hardly be in Raptures with her Agency.—This is the real Truth. Our *Fancy*, till divine Grace regulate and exalt her Operations, is generally employed in picking painted Shells, or culling venomous Herbs. *Weaving* (as the Prophet very elegantly, and no less exactly describes the Case) *the Spider's Web, or hatching Cockatrice Eggs* *. Busied in the most absurd Impertinencies; or acting in Speculation, the vilest

* *Isaiah* lix. 5.

vilest Iniquities. That, which should be a *Garden inclosed, a Fountain sealed* *, for the PRINCE of Peace, is the Thoroughfare of Vanity.—And even when We are renewed in the Spirit of our Mind, O! how necessary is it, to keep an incessant Watch, and exercise a strict Discipline, over this volatile, variable, treacherous *Vagrant* !

The *Memory*, as well as the *Fancy*, is impaired ; or, if not impaired, is debauched. Why else does it so firmly *retain* the Impressions of an Injury, but so easily *let slip* the Remembrance of a Benefit ? Any idle Fopperies, that sooth our Vanity, and increase our Corruption, cleave to the Thoughts, as the vexatious Burr to our Clothes. While the noble Truths of the Gospel, and the rich Mercies of a gracious GOD, slide away from the Mind, and leave no lasting Trace behind them. This double Perverseness is very emphatically, and too truly represented by *Jeremiab* ; *Can a Maid forget her Ornaments, or a Bride her Attire ? Yet my People have forgotten me, Days without Number* †.—If We hear a loose Hint, or read an immodest Expression, they are almost sure to fasten themselves on our Memory. If shaken off, they follow Us with a troublesome Importunity. If excluded, as unwelcome Visitants, they force themselves, again and again, upon our

* *Cant. iv. 12,*

† *Jer. ii. 32,*

our Imagination. They dog Us to the Closet; they haunt our most retired Hours; and too often disturb our very Devotions.—Tell me now, can that Faculty be upright and uncorrupted, which is a *perforated Sieve*, to transmit the Beneficial; but a *thirsty Sponge*, to imbibe the Pernicious *.

Ther. Well, my Friend, whatever Guilt I or Others have contracted, *Flattery*, I am sure, is none of yours. Human Nature is under no Obligation to your Pencil. You have portrayed Her *foolish*, and *beastly*, and every Thing bad but *devilish*.

Assp. And this, even this Abomination I must not secrete, I dare not except.—*Envy* is a devilish Disposition. It subsists no where, but in damned Spirits, and fallen Souls. Yet, infernal as it is, it has been found in Persons of the most exalted Character. The magnanimous *Joshua* felt its cancrous Tooth †. The Disciples of the blessed *JESUS* were soured with its malignant Leaven ‡. An Apostle declares, that *the Spirit which is in Us lusteth to Envy*;

* This, I think, suggests an unanswerable Confutation of that specious Argument, frequently used in Behalf of some *fashionable* but *dissolute* Diversions. “They are interspersed, say their Admirers, with Sentiments of Virtue, and Maxims of Morality.”—Admitting the Truth of this Plea; yet the depraved Disposition of Mankind, is pretty sure to drop the Morality, and carry away the Ribaldry.

† *Numb.* xi. 29.

‡ *Matt.* xx. 24.

Envy *; is impetuously prone to that detestable Temper.

Lying is confessedly a diabolical Practice. Yet, how unaccountably forward are our Children, to utter Falshood? As soon as they are born, they go astray; and as soon as they speak, they speak Lies.—I said *unaccountably*. But I recal the Expression. The Cause is evident. They have lost the Image of the GOD of Truth; and are become like that apostate Spirit, who is a *Lyer, and the Father of it* †.

What think You of *Malice*, of *Hate* and *Revenge*? Are they not each a Species of Murder, and the Seed of the old Serpent? Unless, therefore, We are intirely free from all these hellish Emotions, We must, *We must* acknowledge, that the Prince of this World ‡ has his Party within Us. May the Almighty Hand of our GOD extirpate and subdue it, day by day!

You tell me, I am *no Flatterer*.—Should a Person, who professes Himself the Friend of his Fellow-creatures, soothe them into a *false Peace*? Should He bolster them up in a *groundless Conceit* of their Excellency, when they really are no better than “an unclean Thing?”

—Shall the Surgeon assure his Patient, “All is well;” even when the Mortification has taken place, and the Gangrene is spreading?

This

* *Jam. iv. 5.* † *John viii. 44.* ‡ *John xiv. 30.*

This were to refine the first out of all Benevolence, and to flatter the last into his Grave.

A Disputant of less Complaisance than my *Theron*, would probably ask, with a contemptuous Sneer; "Have You then been drawing your own Picture?"—To Whom I would reply, with Confusion and Sorrow, "I have," Alledging this only, to moderate *my Confusion*; That I am daily seeking, by Prayer and Watchfulness, more and more to put off this old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts*. And, to alleviate *my Sorrow*, I am endeavouring continually to remember; That, however unworthy I am, however vile I may have been, my adored REDEEMER's Righteousness is perfect; and in *this* Righteousness every Believer is to make his Boast.

Ther. So then Man is blind in his Understanding; perverse in his Will; disorderly in his Affections; influenced by Dispositions, that are partly brutal, and partly diabolical.—I have often heard You extol, in Terms of high Admiration, the Virtue of *Humility*. You have lavished all the Riches of Eloquence, when haranguing on Poverty of Spirit. If *such* be the Condition of Mankind, they have infinite Cause to be poor in Spirit. They must, therefore, have *one* Excellency left; and according to your own Account, a very distinguishing one.

Asp.

* *Eph.* iv. 22.

Asp. Scarce any Thing displays, in a more glaring Light, the extreme Depravity of Man, than his strong Propensity to *Pride*; notwithstanding so much Vileness, and so many Deformities.—Should the noisome Leper admire the *Beauty* of his Complexion, or the impotent Paralytic glory in the *Strength* of his Sinews; would they not be mistaken, even to a Degree of Sottishness and Phrenzy? Yet, for Man, fallen Man, who has lost his original Righteousness, which was the true Ornament of his Nature; who is become subject to base and sordid Lusts, or, as the Apostle speaks, *is earthly and sensual*—for Him to be proud, is still more absurdly wicked. And since this is the Case, I cannot acquit Him from the last and heaviest Article of the sacred Writer's Charge; I have a fresh and more convincing Proof, that We do Him no Wrong, when we call his Nature, his Disposition, his *Wisdom—devilish*.*

Ther. Why do You reckon Pride an universally prevailing Corruption? I see no Ground for such a dishonourable Suspicion. I hope, I *myself* am an Instance to the contrary. To unguarded sallies of Passion, to several other Faults, I confess myself subject. But cannot think, that I am proud.

Asp.

Afp. Ah! *Tberon*, if you was not proud, You would not be passionate. Unreasonable Anger always proceeds from an over-weening Opinion of our own Worth.—One who, besides his acquired Knowledge of human Nature, had the supernatural Gift of discerning Spirits, is observed to join *Humility* and *Meekness* *. Intimating, that they are amiable Twins; and where one exists, the other cannot be absent.—Always consistent with Himself, He links together the opposite Vices, *beady and bigb-minded* †: not obscurely hinting, that those who are easily provoked, are certainly proud.—Shall I add, without Offence? If we fanfy our Minds to be clear from the Weeds of Vanity, and our Thoughts free from the Workings of Self-admiration; it is a most pregnant Symptom, that We are *over-run* with the former; *abandoned* to the latter; and *blinded* by both.

Pride was the first Sin, that found Entrance into our Nature; and it is, perhaps, the last that will be expelled.—What are all our Afflictions, but a Remedy provided for this inveterate Disease? Intended to *bide Pride* ‡ from *Man*. What is the Institution of the Gospel, but a Battery erected against this Strong-hold of Satan? Ordained to *cast down every high*
Imagina-

* *Eph.* iv. 2. † *2 Tim.* iii. 4. ‡ *Job* xxxiii. 17.

Imagination *.—Though that Remedy is often applied, though this Battery is continually playing; yet the peccant Humour is not intirely purged off, nor the Elatement of Spirit totally subdued, till Death gives the *finishing* Stroke.

Pride is the Sin that most easily besets Us. *Who can say, I have made my Heart clean* † from this Iniquity? It defiles our Duties, and intermingles itself with our very Virtues. It starts up, I know not how, in our most solemn Hours, and our most sacred Employs.—The good *Hezekiab*, whose Prayers were more powerful than all the Forces of *Sennacherib*, was not Proof against the Wiles of this subtil Sorceress ‡. Even the great Apostle, who had been caught up into the third Heavens, was in Danger of being *puffed up* with Pride. In such great Danger, that it was necessary to put a Lancet into the gathering Tumour; or, as He Himself expresses it, to fix a *Thorn in his Flesh* ||, and permit the *Messenger of Satan* to buffet Him.

How pathetically is this Corruption lamented, and how truly described, by “a sweet Singer of our *Israel*!”

—Pride,

* 2 Cor. x. 4. † Prov. xx. 9. ‡ 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.
|| 2 Cor. xii. 7.

—Pride, that busy Sin,
 Spoils all that I perform,
 Curs'd Pride! that creeps securely in,
 And swells a haughty Worm.

Thy Glories I abate,
 Or praise Thee with Design;
 Part of thy Favours I forget,
 Or think the Merit mine.

The very Songs I frame,
 Are faithless to thy Cause;
 And steal the Honours of thy Name,
 To build their own Applause.

Watts's Hor. Lyr.

Ther. Now, I presume, You have given the last Touches to your distorted Pourtrait.

Asp. There are other disagreeable and shocking Features. But those I shall cast into Shades, or hide under a Veil. One Particular You must allow me to add; which, like a fullen Air in the Countenance, throws an aggravated Horror over the Whole. I mean, An Inclination to be fond of our Slavery.

In other Instances, *the captive Exile baseth to be loosed* *. But here We prefer Bondage to Freedom, and are loth to leave our Prison.—

Of

* *Isaiab li. 14.*

Of this, our Backwardness to *Self-examination*, is both a Consequence and a Proof. Self-examination would open a Window in our Dungeon; would shew Us our wretched Condition; and teach Us to sigh for Deliverance.— Why have We such a Dislike of *Reproof*? Because we hug our Chains, and choose Darkness rather than Light. Reproof is more grating than the harshest Discord; though it tends to dissolve the Enchantment, and rescue Us from the Tyranny of Sin. While *Flattery*, which abets the Delusion, and strengthens the Spell, is Music to our Ears.—Is not our *Reason*, which should arraign and condemn every Irregularity, forward to invent Excuses, and to spare the favourite Folly? Reason, which should draw the *Dagger*, superinduces the *Mask*; and, instead of striking at the Heart of our Vices, screens them under the Cover of some plausible Names. A wicked Habit is called a human Infirmary; insinuating Diversions pass for innocent Amusements; a revengeful Disposition is termed Spirit, Gallantry, and Honour. Thus our Reason (if, when so egregiously perverted, it deserves the Name) is ingenious to obstruct our Recovery; and rivets on the Shackles, which our Passions have formed*.

This

* Perhaps, this is what our LORD means, when, developing the human Heart, and discovering its latent Enormities,

This the eternal WISDOM forefaw, and therefore uttered that tender Expostulation; *How long Ye simple Ones will Ye love Simplicity, and Scorners delight in their Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge?* Even the inestimably precious Knowledge of an all-atoning and completely justifying SAVIOUR; who preaches, who has purchased, and who works Deliverance—preaches in his Word, has purchased by his Blood, and works by his SPIRIT, Deliverance for the Captives—the wretched Captives of Ignorance, Sin, and Death.

This I take to be the most *flagrant* and *deplorable* Effect of human Depravity—our Averſion to the Doctrine, the Privileges, the Grace of the Gospel. Beware, dear *Theron*, leſt You prove my Point by—ſhall I ſpeak it? Would You ſuſpect it?—your own Practice. Zealous as I am for my Tenets, I ſhould be ſorry, extremely ſorry, to have *ſuch* a Demonſtration of their Truth.

Ther. You are highly obliging, *Aspaſio*, to ſingle *me* out for your Evidence. Yet why ſhould the Honour be appropriated to myſelf? It belongs, upon the Foot of the preceding Calculation, not to your Friend only, but to the

mities, He cloſes the dark Account with *απορουν Fooliſhneſs*: implying that *Stupidity*, which has no Senſe of its Miſery; that *Perverſeneſs*, which has no Inclination for a Recovery. Both which render all the other Evils far more incurable.

Mark vii. 22.

the whole Species.—If You was aiming at None but the Licentious and Abandoned, You would have None to oppose You, but Persons of that Character. Your Arrows of Satyr, would then be rightly leveled, and might be serviceable to Mankind. Whereas, to put *All* in the black List; to mark *All* with the Villain's Brand; this can never be *Christian* Charity; this is unsufferable Censoriousness.

Asp. Let me beseech You, *Theron*, not to misapprehend my Design. I speak not as a malevolent Satyrift, but would imitate the faithful Physician. I am opening the Sore, that it may admit the healing Balm: and should I perform the Operation with an *envenomed* Instrument? My Soul abhors the Thought.—I must intreat You likewise to remember the Distinction, between a State of Nature, and a State of Grace. We are all naturally evil. Such We should for ever continue, did not a *supernatural* Power intervene; making some to differ, both from their original Selves, and from the Generality of their Neighbours.—Are they refined in their Temper, and reformed in their Life? I grant it. But then it is the Influence of the sanctifying SPIRIT, which purges away their Dross; yet not without leaving *some Alloy*.

Ther. Here, *Aspasio*, You certainly strain the Bow, till it breaks. Since Scripture itself celebrates

celebrates some Persons, as absolutely perfect.—What says *Moses*, the inspired Historian? *Noah was perfect in his Generation* *.—What says the GOD of *Moses*, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived? *Job was a perfect Man and an upright* †.—Consequently, *their* Nature must be intirely cleansed from this hereditary Defilement; and *their* Character confutes your derogatory Representations of Mankind.

Asp. Those eminent Saints were perfect, That is, they were *sanctified throughout*. Sanctified in all their Faculties. No one Grace of Religion was lacking. As in the new-born Infant, there is a human Creature complete; no constituent Part of the vital Frame is wanting: though each is tender; all are very feeble; and none arrived at the full Size.

They were *upright*. This Word seems to be explanatory of the preceding; and signifies an unfeigned Desire, joined with a hearty Endeavour, to obey the whole Will of GOD; excluding, not all Defect, but all *reigning* Hypocrisy, and *wilful* Remissness.—The Interpretation, thus limited, is of a piece with their Conduct. If stretched to a higher Pitch, it is evidently inconsistent with the Narrative of their Lives.

Pray, what was your Motive, for decorating the silvan Retirement, (that sheltered Us yesterday) with the Statue of *Elijah*?

Ther.

* Gen. vi. 9.

† Job i. 1.

Ther. Because I thought, his solitary Life, and gloomy Temper, suited that sequestered Bower. Because the memorable Adventure, there represented, is, with me, a favourite Portion of sacred History.

Are We pleased with spirited and delicate *Rallery*? Nothing exceeds his pungent Sarcasm, upon the stupid and despicable Dupes of Idolatry. Every Sentence is keen as a Razor, and pointed as a Dagger, yet wears the Appearance of the most courtly Complaisance. We may truly say, in the beautiful Language of the Psalmist, *His Words are smother than Oil, and yet be they very Swords* *.

Are We delighted with Instances of *Magnanimity*? A single Prophet, unsupported by any human Aid, maintains the Cause of Truth, against the King, his Grandees, and hundreds of the apostate Priests. He ventures to stake all his Credit, to risk his very Life, and (what was dearer to Him than personal Credit, or bodily Life,) the Honour of the true GOD, and Interests of his holy Religion—to risk all on the *immediate* Interposition of a most surprising Miracle.

Do We admire the Triumphs of *Faith*? His Faith was, in a manner, omnipotent. He prays, and

* 1 Kings xviii. 27. And it came to pass at Noon, that *Elijah* mocked them, and said; *Cry aloud; for He is a God. Either He is talking, or He is pursuing, or He is in a Journey, or peradventure He sleepeth, and must be awaked.*

and *Torrents of Fire* descend from the Sky, to devour his Adversaries *.—He prays again, and the *Sluices of Heaven* are *shut*; there is neither Dew nor Rain for several Years †.—A third Time He prays, and the Windows from on High are *opened*; Abundance of Showers water the Earth ‡.—On another Occasion He presents his Supplications, and GOD makes his Feet like Harts Feet. Insomuch that an aged Prophet *outruns* the royal Chariot §.

Asp. I commend your Taste, *Theron*: and am particularly pleased with the Reasons of your Choice.—But do not you remember, that even the Wonder-working *Tisbbite* failed in his Resignation, and failed in his Faith? Eminent as He was for Mortification, He gave way to *unreasonable* Discontent; and, though a Champion for the living GOD, He yielded to *unbelieving* Fear §.—*The Man Moses was very meek, above all the Men which were upon the Face*

* 2 Kings i. 10.

† 1 Kings xvii. 1.

‡ Jam. v. 17, 18.

§ 1 Kings xviii. 46.

§ *Elias*, or rather *Elijah*, was a Man subject to like Passions as We are. James v. 17. Upon which Passage, an eminent Commentator makes the following Remark; "This probably is said, with respect to his Fear and Discontent, manifested 1 Kings xix. 3, 4."—*Opposition* must, I think, imply a State, liable to the irregular Workings of Passion; not free from the *sinful* Infirmities of Nature. Otherwise, it is an Instance foreign to the Purpose; does by no means answer the End designed; which is to encourage the Heart, and strengthen the Faith, even of *frail, corrupt, offending* Creatures. See *ver.* 16.

Face of the Earth * : Yet He, even He was provoked in his Spirit, and spake unadvisedly with his Lips †.—Was not *Peter* the Hero among our LORD's Followers? Remarkable for his Resolution and Intrepidity. Yet He trembles, more than trembles, at the Shaking of a Leaf; He denies his divine MASTER, scared by the Voice of a Woman.

Look where-ever We will, We find Proofs of human Depravity; reigning *uncontrolled* in Some, making frequent *Insurrection* in All. It is written on our own Hearts, by the Pen of Experience; the Finger of Observation points it out, in the Practice of Others.—Even in the Practice of *Those*, who have been Saints of the first Rank, and of the highest Attainments. Yet they were defective.—Defective too, in *that very Quality*, which was their distinguishing Gift; in which they particularly excelled.

Ther. While We are talking, the Day has insensibly stole itself away, and left Us surrounded with *Twilight*. Which is a sort of Lustre intermingled with Darkness: no Part wholly lucid; no Part wholly obscure.—An Emblem, according to your Representation, of the renewed Soul, and its imperfect Holiness.

Ass. A very just one.—Even where the Gospel shines, still there is an *intercurrent* Gloom of

* Numb. xii. 3.

† Psalm cvi. 33.

of Corruption. Ignorance mixes itself with our Knowledge. Unbelief cleaves to our Faith. Nor is our Purity free from all Contamination.—The Prophet *Zechariah*, foretelling the Establishment of the Gospel Kingdom, and describing the State of its spiritual Subjects, says; *It shall come to pass in that Day, that the Light shall not be clear, nor dark* *. This, as to its *literal* Sense, We now see exemplified in the circumambient Atmosphere. With regard to its *spiritual* Meaning, every true Believer feels it accomplished in his own Breast.

Ther. While You are so vehement, in decrying all human Attainments; consider, *Aspasio*, whether You do not *check* and *dispirit* Us, in the Pursuit of exalted Virtue.

Asp. I suppose, You never expected to be such an Adept in Geometry as *Archimedes*, nor so profound an Astronomer as *Newton*; yet this did not *check* your Application to the Study of Mathematics, or the Contemplation of the Heavens.—Your Brother the Merchant, I presume, has no Prospect of amassing the Wealth of a *Cræsus*, or the immense Treasures of a *Kouli-Khan*; yet this does not *dispirit* Him in prosecuting the Business, which brings Him both Opulence and Honour.

However, *Theron*, so long as You deny the Imputation of *CHRIST*'s Righteousness, I must

* *Zech.* xiv. 6.

must acknowledge, You act a consistent Part, in being zealous for the Perfection of personal Obedience. You ought either to *acquire* the One, or to *accept* the Other. Therefore, I shall produce no more Arguments for your Discouragement; but shall comprize the Whole of my Answer, in the Motto to an *Irisb* Nobleman's Arms, TRY. Or, if this be too concise, I will subjoin, with a very little Alteration, the Words of a King; "When You have attained what You pursue, *bring me Word again, that I may go, and follow it also.*"

Ther. According to your Account, the most advanced and established *Christians*, are but like a Company of *Invalids*. Does not this extremely derogate from the Honour of our LORD, considered as the *Physician* of Souls? It seems to make a mere Nothing of Sanctification; and would swallow up *CHRIST* the King, in *CHRIST* the Priest.

Ass. Invalids they are †; and such will continue, till they are dismissed from this great Infirmary,

* *Matt. ii. 8.*

† Do not the *best* of Men lament their Ignorance of the divine Perfections, their Slowness of Heart to believe the divine Promises, and the Languor of their Gratitude for inestimable, for innumerable Gifts of the divine Goodness?—Do they not frequently feel Deadness in their Devotions, Disorder in their Affections, and various other Relics of the original Leaven?—Do they not often complain, in the Language of the Apostle, *When I would do Good, Evil is present with*

Infirmity, and admitted into that holy, happy, blessed World; Where *the Inhabitant shall no more say, I am either in Soul or in Body sick* *.

If the Cure was *never* to be completed, this doubtless would be dishonourable to our Almighty PHYSICIAN. But the spiritual Recovery, begun on Earth and advancing through Time, will be perfected in Heaven, and prolonged to Eternity.—Does this make a mere Nothing of Sanctification? No, but it makes Room for a continual *Progress*, and affords Cause for continual *Humiliation*. It reserves a noble Prerogative, for the heavenly State and beatific Vision; and perpetually reminds Us of a most important Truth, That our present Blessedness does not consist in being *free* from Sin, but in *not* having Sin *imputed* to Us †.

This Imperfection of our Obedience, instead of confounding, maintains a proper *Distinction* between *CHRIST* the King, and *CHRIST* the Priest. Whereas, if We were

perfect with me? And say, with the earliest *Christians*? *We that are in this Tabernacle do groan, being burdened*. Burdened, not so much with Affliction: those Heroes in *Christianity* had learnt, to *rejoice in Tribulation*. * But burdened with a Sense of their spiritual Infirmities, and with the Workings of their inbred Corruption. Which, to a tender and lively Believer, are the *heaviest* of Crosses, and the *most galling* of Loads.—Nay; do not the Heirs of Glory *wash their very Robes*, even their fairest Deeds, and their brightest Graces, *in the Blood of the LAMB*? Which, if they were free from Spot, and void of Impurity, could have no need to be *made white* in this sacred Fountain. See 2 *Cor.* v. 4. *Rev.* vii. 14.

* *Isaiah* xxxiii. 24.

† *Psalms* xxxii. 1.

perfect in Piety, the priestly Office, with regard to Us, would be superseded. What Need of an Intercessor, to recommend our Prayers? What Occasion for an High-Priest, to *bear the Iniquity of our holy Things* *? If some Taint of the original Leaven did not pollute our best Services?

Neither does this detract from the Wisdom, from the Goodness, or from the Power of *CHRIST*. It rather administers to the advantageous Display of all these divine Attributes.—Of his *Wisdom*; in conducting the Affairs of his Church with such exact Propriety, that the Righteousness of Faith may have its due Honour, and the Sanctification of the SPIRIT its proper Esteem.—Of his *Goodness*; in carrying on the Work of Grace, amidst so much Infirmary, and so many Corruptions; and in crowning, with consummate Happiness, such frail undeserving Creatures.—Of his *Power*; in extracting a Variety of Benefits even from—

Ther. Benefits, Aspasio!—Can any thing beneficial proceed from an Evil, which, according to your own Representation, is so incorrigibly malignant?

Asp. It will tend to make Us *lowly in our own Eyes*. When We remember, that by Nature We are altogether become abominable; that

* *Exod.* xxviii. 38.

that the Remains of natural Depravity still adhere to our Minds; how must such a View of Ourselves cover Us with Shame, and lay Us low in Abasement! *Less than the least of all thy Mercies* *, will be the Language of such a One's very Soul.

It will render Us *compassionate to Others*. How can We take a Brother by the Throat, and require faultless Perfection in his Behaviour, when We Ourselves in many Things offend, in all Things fall short? Every such Consideration pleads for Indulgence to our Fellow-creatures: is a Monitor within, and whispers this affecting Remonstrance, *Oughtest not Thou to have Pity upon thy Fellow-servant, since thy Almighty LORD has such unwearied, such infinite Pity on Thee* †?

It will teach Us to *admire the Riches of Grace*. Shall fallen Creatures, that are taken from the very Dunghills of Sin, and rescued from a Hell of inward Iniquity—Shall *they*, notwithstanding their deplorable Depravity, and innumerable Deficiencies—Shall *they* be admitted into the Bosom of eternal Love? *They* be exalted to the Thrones of Glory, and numbered with the Princes of Heaven ‡? This is Grace, transcendently rich, and divinely free indeed!

It

* Gen. xxxii. 10.

† Matt. xviii. 33.

‡ Εξ οὐν εἰς οὐα.

It will *reconcile* Us to the Approach of *Death*. This, like Wormwood on the Nipple, or Gall in the Cup, must wean Us from a wretched World. How can We be enamoured with such a Vale of Tears? Or why should We covet, when Providence gives the Signal for our Departure, to prolong our Abode in these Territories of *Disorder*? Surely, this must incline Us to leave them, every Day, more and more in our Affections; and at last, to leave them, without any Reluctance, by final Dissolution. Leave them, for that better Country, where our personal Righteousness will no longer be defective, like the *waning* Moon; but shine forth with consummate Lustre, like the *meridian* Sun in the Kingdom of our FATHER.

It will *endear* the blessed *JESUS* in every Capacity; as the Stings of the fiery flying Serpents, and the Dearth of the waste howling Wilderness, endeared to the *Israelites* both their miraculous Antidote, and their Bread from Heaven.—They that believe this Truth, must see their inexpressible and incessant Need of *CHRIST*'s Spirit. The Protestation of *Moses* on a particular Occasion, will be the daily, the hourly Breathing of their Souls; *Carry Us not up hence, unless thy Presence, thy SPIRIT, go with Us* *. For without this Aid, We can discharge

* *Exod. xxxiii. 15.*

discharge no Duty aright, nor successfully resist any Temptation. They will be exceedingly cautious, not to *grieve* * that sacred Guest, lest He depart from them, and abandon them to the Power of their lurking Corruptions. Knowing, that if *He* abandon them, when such Foes are within, and so many Snares without; their Case will be worse than *Samson's*, when his Locks were shaven, and the *Philistines* all around Him.

How highly will such Persons value the *Blood* of the Covenant, and the *Intercession* of their great HIGH-PRIEST!—They will no more presume to enter into the Presence of the most High GOD, without a fiducial Reliance upon the atoning and interceding *SAVIOUR*; than the Sons of *Jacob* would have ventured to appear before the Viceroy of *Aegypt*, without the Company of their younger Brother. In all, in all their Intercourse with Heaven, the great Propitiation will be their Plea, and the great ADVOCATE their Confidence.—The impotent Man waited at the Pool of *Bethesda*, and the Syrian General dipped seven Times in *Jordan*. These Persons will not only *wait*, but *live* by the Fountain opened for Sin and Uncleanness †. They will wash in the sacred sanctifying Stream, not *seven* Times only, but *seventy Times seven*.

And

* *Eph. iv. 30.*

† *Zech. xiii. 1.*

And when such Sentiments possess the Mind, how dear! O how *dear* and *desirable* will our LORD's Obedience be!—I once called our own Works *Worm-eaten Things*; and must not these Corruptions, if they remain ever so little in our Hearts, tarnish our Graces, and debase our Duties? Must they not be depreciatory to all our Accomplishments; and too much like *corroding Vermin*, in the Substance of our Timber, or at the Core of our Fruits?—Should We not then renounce, utterly renounce, what may truly be stiled *A Thing of naught*? And rely, wholly rely, on our divine HIGH-PRIEST? Who, in his mediatorial Works, as well as in his wonderful Person, is altogether *Light* and *Perfection*; and neither in Him, nor in them, is there any Deficiency or any Darkness at all.

Excuse me, *Theron*; I fear, I have been preaching. The Importance of the Text, must form my Apology. It is an *Introduction*, not to the Records of History, or the Transactions of Philosophy, but to the Riches of *CHRIST*.

Ther. If my *Aspasio* has been preaching, I can assure Him for his Comfort, that his Audience has been very attentive; and though the Sermon was somewhat copious, the Hearer neither slept nor gaped.—However, I should be glad to have the Whole reviewed, and

summed up: that, if it has been large as the Pyramid, it may, like the Pyramid, terminate in a *Point*.

Asp. This then is the State of our Nature—The Image of the CREATOR is lost: Darkness is on the Understanding: Disorder in all the Affections.—In the Will, Enmity against GOD, the sovereign Good: Inability to all that is spiritual and heavenly: with a Propensity to whatever is fordid and earthly.—The whole Soul is deformed, distempered, rebellious.—And shall such a Creature lay claim to those amiable and sacred Endowments, which may be a *proper Recommendation* to infinite Holiness?—Is such a Creature qualified to perform those righteous Acts, which may approve themselves to the *Demand* of GOD's Law, and to the *Inflexibility* of his Justice.

Should he conceive the vain Hope, or make the vainer Attempt, I would now address Him, as *Jeboash* formerly answered *Amaziah*. *Amaziah* King of *Judah*, elated with the little Victories he had obtained over the *Edomites*, began to fancy Himself invincible. Prompted by this foolish Imagination, He challenges *Jeboash* King of *Israel*, to meet Him in a pitched Battle; and receives this ironical Apologue, by way of Reply—Which, for Gallantry of Spirit and Delicacy of Wit, for Poignancy of Satire and Propriety of Application, has

has seldom been equaled, perhaps never exceeded—*The Thistle that was in Lebanon, sent to the Cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy Daughter to my Son to Wife: and there passed by a wild Beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the Thistle* *. What are We—when We offer to establish our own Righteousness, or presume to justify Ourselves before the most High GOD—but *despicable Thistles*, that fancy themselves *stately Cedars*? And is not every Temptation, is not each Corruption, a wild Beast of the Desert, that will trample on the impotent Boaster, and tread his haughty Pretensions in the Dust?

* 2 Kings xiv. 9.





DIALOGUE XIV.

 **SPASIO** was employed in preparing for his Journey. *Theron*, free from Business, and disengaged from Company, had the greatest Part of the Day to Himself. Which He spent, in reviewing the Substance of their late Conferences; not without intermingled Aspirations to GOD, for the Guidance of his DIVINE SPIRIT.

At Evening, He *went*, like the Patriarch of old, *into the Field to meditate**: amidst the Calm of Nature, to meditate on the Grace of the Gospel.—The Sky was peculiarly beautiful, and perfectly clear; only where the fine *Indigo* received an agreeable Heightening, by a few thin and scattered Clouds; which imbibed the solar Rays, and looked like penfile Fleeces

* Gen. xxiv. 63.

DIALOGUE XIV. 309

Fleeces of purest *Wool*.—All Things appeared with so mild, so majestic, so charming an Aspect, that, intent as He was upon a different Subject, He could not but indulge the following Soliloquy.

“How delightful are the Scenes of rural
“Nature! Especially, to the *philosophic* Eye,
“and *contemplative* Mind.—I cannot wonder,
“that Persons in high Life, are so fond of
“retiring from a conspicuous and exalted Sta-
“tion, to the Covert of a shady Grove, or the
“Margin of a cooling Stream. Are so desir-
“ous of quitting the smoky Town, and noisy
“Street; in order to breathe purer Air, and
“survey the Wonders of Creation, in the silent,
“the serene, the peaceful *Villa*.

“’Tis true, in the Country, there are none
“of the modish, I had almost said, meretrici-
“ous Ornaments of that *false* Politeness, which
“refines People out of their Veracity. But
“an easy Simplicity of Manners, with an un-
“affected Sincerity of Mind.—Here, the so-
“lemn Farce of Ceremony is seldom brought
“into Play; and the pleasing Delusions of
“Compliment have no Place. But the Brow
“is the *real* Index of the Temper, and Speech
“the *genuine* Interpreter of the Heart.

“In the Country, I acknowledge, We see
“little of the *mimic* Attempts of human Art.
“But We, every where, behold the *grand* and

310 D I A L O G U E XIV.

“ *masterly* Exertions of divine Power. — No
 “ *Theatre* erects its narrow Stage; surrounds
 “ it, with puny Rows of ascending Seats; or
 “ adorns it, with a shifting Series of gorge-
 “ ous Scenery. But *Fields* extend their ample
 “ Area; at first, lightly clad with a Scarf of
 “ springing Green; then, deeply planted with
 “ an Arrangement of spindling Stalks; as a
 “ few more Weeks advance, covered with a
 “ Profusion of bearded or husky Grain; at
 “ last, richly laden with a Harvest of yellow
 “ Plenty.

“ *Meadows* disclose their beautiful Bosom;
 “ yield a soft and fertile Lap for the luxuriant
 “ Herbage; and suckle Myriads of the fairest,
 “ gayest Flowers. Which, without any vain
 “ Ostentation, or expensive Finery, outvie each
 “ other in all the Elegance of Dress. — *Groves*
 “ of various Leaf; arrayed in freshest Verdure,
 “ and liberal of their reviving Shade; rise, in
 “ amiable, in noble Prospect, all around. —
 “ *Droves* of sturdy Oxen, strong for Labour,
 “ or fat for the Shambles; *Herd*s of sleeky
 “ Kine, with Milk in their Udders, and Vio-
 “ lets in their Nostrils; *Flocks* of well-fleeced
 “ Sheep, with their snowy Lambkins, frisking
 “ at their Side; *these* compose the living Ma-
 “ chinery. — Boundless Tracts of bending *Azure*,
 “ varnished with inimitable Delicacy, and hung
 “ with starry Lamps, or irradiated with solar
 “ Lustre,

“ Lustre, form the stately Cieling.—While the
 “ early Breezes, and the evening Gales; charged
 “ with no unwholsome Vapours, breeding no
 “ pestilential Taint; but fanning the humid
 “ Buds, and waving their odoriferous Wings,
 “ dispense a thousand *Sweets*, mingled with
 “ the most sovereign Supports of Health.—
 “ And is not this School of Industry, this Ma-
 “ gazine of Plenty, incomparably *more delight-*
 “ *ful*, as well as infinitely *less dangerous*, than
 “ those gaudy Temples of Profuseness and De-
 “ bauchery, where Sin and Ruin wear the
 “ Mask of Pleasure? Where *Belial* is daily or
 “ nightly worshipped with, what his Votaries
 “ call, modish Recreation, and genteel Amuse-
 “ ment?

“ Here indeed is no tuneful *Voice*, to melt
 “ in Strains of amorous Anguish, and trans-
 “ fuse the sickening Fondness to the Hearer’s
 “ Breast. No skilful Artist, to inform the
 “ *Lute* with musical Inchantment; to strike
 “ infectious Melody from the Viol; and sooth
 “ away the Resolution and Activity of Virtue,
 “ in wanton Desires, or voluptuous Indolence.
 “ —But the *Plains* bleat; the *Mountains* low;
 “ and the hollow circling *Rocks* echo with the
 “ universal Song. Every Valley remurmurs
 “ to the Fall of silver Fountains, or the liquid
 “ Lapse of gurgling Rills.—*Birds*, Musicians
 “ ever beauteous, ever gay, perched on a thou-

312 DIALOGUE XIV

"sant Boughs, play a thousand sprightly and
"harmonious Airs.

"Charmed therefore with the finest Views;
"lulled with the softest Sounds; and treated
"with the richest Odours; what can be want-
"ing to complete the Delight? Here is every
"Entertainment for the Eye; the most refined
"Gratifications for the Ear; and a perpetual
"Banquet for the Smell; without any insidi-
"ous Decoy, for the Integrity of our Conduct;
"or even for the Purity of our Fancy.

"O ye blooming Walks, and flowery Lawns,
"surrounded with dewy Landscapes! How
"often have *Patriots* and *Heroes*, laid aside the
"Burden of Power, and stole away from the
"Glare of Grandeur, to enjoy themselves *
"in your composed Retreats!—Ye mossy
"Couches, and fragrant Bowers, skirted with
"cooling Cascades! How many illustrious Per-
"sonages, after all their glorious Toil for the
"public Good, have sought an honourable and
"welcome Repose in your downy Lap †—
"Ye venerable Oaks, and solemn Groves;
"Woods, that whisper to the quivering Gale;
"Cliffs,

— *Mibi me reddentis Agelli,*
says *Horace* of his little Country-seat.

† *Virgil* was so smitten with the Amiability of these
Scenes, that He assigns them as an Habitation for happy Spi-
rits, in the Regions of *Elysium*.

— *Lucis habitamus opacis,*
Riparumque Toros, & Prata recentia Rivis
Incolimus.

“ Cliffs, that over-hang the darkened Flood ;
 “ Who can number the *Sages* and *Saints*, that
 “ have devoted the Day to Study, or resigned
 “ a vacant Hour to healthy Exercise, beneath
 “ your silvan Porticos, and waving Arches ?
 “ That, far from the dull Impertinence of
 “ Man, have listened to the instructive Voice
 “ of GOD ; and contemplated the Works of
 “ his adorable Hand, amidst your moss-grown
 “ Cells, and rocky Shades. — How *inelegant*,
 “ or how *insensible* is the Mind, which has no
 “ awakened lively Relish for these sweet Re-
 “ cesses, and their exquisite Beauties !”

But whither am I carried ? Is not this *rural*
Enthusiasm ? I find myself talking to Trees ;
 and forget the momentous Question, that waits
 for our Decision. Here then let my Rhapsody
 cease, and my Inquiry proceed. — Does it be-
 tray a Want of true Delicacy, to be insensible
 of Nature's Charms ? My *Aspasio* thinks, it
 argues as wrong a Taste in practical Divinity,
 not to acquiesce in the imputed Righteousness
 of *JESUS CHRIST*. — To this Doctrine I
 have always been extremely averse. I set my-
 self to oppose it with Objections, drawn from
 the *Reason* of Things, and from various Pas-
 sages of *Scripture*. To all which my Friend
 replied. And though I was scarcely convinced,
 yet I was silenced by his Answers.

I pleaded

I pleaded for the Sufficiency of our *sincere* Obedience. Especially, when accompanied with *Repentance*, and recommended by the *Merits* of *CHRIST*.—Neither was this Attempt successful. His Arguments, somewhat like the flaming Sword, planted at the Entrance of Paradise, *turned every Way**; and precluded all Access to Life, on the Foot of our own Duty.

At length, *Aspasio* quitted the defensive, and attacked me in his Turn. He explained the *Nature*, and enforced the Threatenings, of the divine Law. So *exact* its Rules! That it demands a perfect and persevering Conformity to every Injunction.—So *extensive* its Authority! That it reaches the inmost Thoughts; and requires Obedience, not barely in the Actions of the Life, but the very Intentions of the Heart.—So *inexorable* its Severity! That it condemns every the smallest Offence, and curses every the least Offender.

This Remonstrance; had some of the Terror, and almost all the Effect, of a masked Battery. It was quite unexpected, and alarmed me considerably.—To push his Advantage, He enlarged upon the *infinite Purity* of *GOD*.—A *GOD*, glorious in Holiness—*Who cannot look upon Evil*, with any Connivance, or without the utmost Abhorrence. Before whom the

* Gen. iii. 24.

very Heavens are unclean, and who will in no wise clear the Guilty.

To complete his Victory, He played off the Doctrine of original *Guilt*, and original *Depravity*.—That, besides the Imputation of *Adam's* Apostacy; besides the Commission of numberless Iniquities; We were born in Sin—Are, by Nature, Enmity against GOD—In all our Faculties corrupt—In every Imagination evil—And, even when renewed by Grace, are still, still tainted with some base *Remains* of the old Leprosy.

After all, He bid me consider,—What Fruits must spring, from *such a Nature*?—How they must appear, when compared with *such a Law*?—What they must deserve, when tried before *such a GOD*?—These, I must confess, are very weighty and startling Queries. If these Representations are true, the Face of human Affairs carries a most gloomy Aspect. Or rather, a most dreadful Storm is hanging over the Children of Men.—*Assasio* urges me to fly, without any Delay, to the Covert of *CHRIST's* meritorious Obedience. This, He says, was wrought out, in my Name, and in my Stead: this will be admitted, both at the Throne of Grace, and the Bar of Judgment, as my justifying Righteousness.

This, He adds, opens a Way, on GOD's Part, for the largest Emanations and most honourable

nourable Exercise of Mercy. On Man's Part, it founds a Title to Pardon, to Life, and every spiritual Blessing.—This Doctrine, especially in such a Connection, begins to put on a *more recommending* Appearance. My Prejudices are really wearing away. I am almost a Convert.

Aspasio over-heard the Close of these Reflections. Unwilling to interrupt his Friend, in so serious an Inquiry; and desirous to observe the Issue of so interesting a Debate; He had hitherto concealed Himself. But thinking this a most favourable Minute, He stepped forward, and said—

Asp. Almost! and why not altogether a Convert? What should hinder my dear *Theron*, from submitting to so *rational* a Scheme, with the most intire Acquiescence? What should hinder Him from embracing so *comfortable* a Doctrine, with the utmost Complacency? Why should he not subscribe, both with Hand and Heart, that divine Decree? *Their Righteousness is of me, saith the LORD**.

Ther. If, by this Doctrine, The Claims of the Law are answered—If the Perfections of GOD are glorified—If the Interests of Morality are secured—I must acknowledge, it will be *more worthy* of Acceptance, than I could once have imagined.

Asp.

* *Isaiah* liv. 17.

Ass. And if all these Points are not gained; gained too in the most eminent Manner; I solemnly declare, that I will never plead for imputed Righteousness more.

But the *Claims* of the Law are all answered. For, there is nothing in its sacred Injunctions, which *CHRIST* did not perform; and nothing in its awful Threatenings, which *CHRIST* did not sustain. He fulfilled all its Precepts, by an unspotted Purity of Heart, and the most perfect Integrity of Life. He exhausted its whole Curse, when he hung upon the Cross, abandoned by his FATHER, and a bleeding Victim for the Sins of his People.—This Obedience brings higher Honour to the divine Law, than it could have received, from the uninterrupted Duty of *Adam*, and all his Posterity, in all their Generations.

The *Perfections* of GOD, which were dishonoured by our Rebellion, are glorified. He appears, by this Method of Justification, inconceivably rich in shewing Mercy; yet steady, inflexibly steady, in executing Vengeance. The *Sceptre* of Grace, and the *Sword* of Justice, have each their due Exercise, each their full Scope. The Holiness of the divine Nature, and the Dignity of the divine Government, are not only maintained, but most magnificently displayed. Indeed, it is the peculiar Excellence of this wonderful Expedient, that it renders

renders *all* the divine Attributes supremely venerable, and supremely amiable.

Ther. But are the Interests of *Morality* secured? This is what I am strongly inclined to doubt. And to say the Truth, this is now my principal Objection to your Scheme.

Asp. I shall never blame my Friend, for being vigilant and jealous over the Interests of *Morality*. If our Doctrine had an unfriendly Aspect on true *Morality*, I would give my Voice against it, and use all my Endeavours to suppress it.—But it is formed with every Tendency, to awaken the *utmost Dread* of Sin, and affect Us with the *warmest Sense* of our CREATOR's Love. And is not *that* the strongest Barrier against the Encroachments of Vice? Is not *this* the sweetest Inducement to the Practice of Virtue?

I am glad to find, that a Jealousy for the Interests of *Morality*, is the chief Obstacle in the Way of your Assent. Because, I am persuaded, it is much of the same Nature with those forbidding and mistaken Apprehensions, which our Ancestors entertained, concerning the *Ocean*. They looked upon it, as an unsurmountable Obstruction, to universal Society. Whereas it is in Fact, the very *Cement* of Society; the Means of universal Intercourse; and the great High-way to all the Nations of the Earth. What is here affirmed, may, on
some

some future Occasion, be proved.—At present, let me desire you to imagine, rather, may the blessed SPIRIT enable You to believe, That your Sins *are expiated*, through the Death of *JESUS CHRIST*: That a Righteousness is given You, by virtue of which, You may have free and welcome Access to GOD; the Merit of which you may plead, for obtaining all the Blessings of Time and Eternity.—Then let me ask; Will this *alienate* your Affections from your Almighty BENEFACTOR? Will this *irritate* evil Concupiscence, or send You to carnal Gratifications in quest of Happiness? Quite the Reverse. When this Faith is wrought in your Heart, nothing will be so powerful, to produce holy Love, and willing Obedience; to exalt your Desires, and enable You to overcome the World.

What says the Apostle? *I through the Law am dead to the Law* *. Being made to understand its Spirituality and Perfection, I have no longer any Hope of Justification from my own Conformity to its Precepts.—Did this prompt Him, did this embolden Him, to neglect or violate his Duty? Hear the sacred Writer's own Declaration. I am released from the Rigour and Bondage of the Law; I am directed to *CHRIST* for Righteousness and Salvation; *that I may live unto GOD*. That my whole Life

* Gal. ii. 19.

Life may be devoted to HIS Honour, who has brought me into a State so delightful, into a Liberty so glorious.

Ther. This Liberty, I am afraid, will be of very little Service to the licentious and gay World.

Asp. I shall be in no Pain even for the *gay World*, if once they cordially receive this Grace, and are vitally influenced by this Doctrine. Which, far from dissolving the least Obligation to Obedience, or weakening any one Principle of Piety, adds to every other Motive, the endearing Engagements of Gratitude, and the winning Persuasives of Love.—Nay; I verily believe, that Multitudes in the gay and licentious World, are held fast in the *fatal* Snare, by their Ignorance of this sweet, alluring, consolatory Truth. They find themselves deeply obnoxious to divine Justice, and feel themselves strongly bound with the Chains of Sensuality. They think, it is impossible for them to clear the dreadful Score of their Guilt; impossible to deliver themselves from the confirmed Dominion of Sin. And therefore, like *hopeless* Debtors, they stifle every serious Thought, and increase the long Arrear. But if they were informed, that the infinitely merciful SON of GOD, has undertaken to redeem such undone and helpless Sinners—That He has thoroughly expiated even the
most

most horrid Transgressions, and procured for ungodly Wretches, all the needful Supplies of strengthening Grace—That, instead of being prohibited, they are *invited* to partake, *freely* to partake, of these unspeakable Blessings—Were they acquainted with these glad Tidings of the Gospel, surely they would burst the Chains, and spring to Liberty. These *Truths*, if once revealed and received in their Hearts, would, of all Considerations, be most effectual to *make them free* *.

What shall I say more, to obtain my *Theron's* Approbation? Shall I point out and plead the most illustrious Precedents?—GOD the FATHER is well pleased with this Righteousness of our REDEEMER. He expresses his Complacency by the most emphatical Words: *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my Soul delighteth* †. In CHRIST and his Righteousness, GOD is not only pleased, but *delighted*: his *very Soul*, every Perfection of the GODHEAD, with ineffable Satisfaction, rests and acquiesces in them.—I said *ineffable*; for He has spoke this, in a Manner superior to all the Energy of Language, by raising our crucified SURETY from the Dead; by exalting Him to the Heaven of Heavens; and placing Him at his own Right-hand in Glory.

* John viii. 32. † Isaiah xlii. 1.

Our *LORD JESUS CHRIST* is well pleased. He esteems it his Honour to shine forth as the everlasting Righteousness of his People. It is the brightest Jewel of his mediatorial Crown. In this He *sees of the Travail of his Soul, and is satisfied.* Accounting Himself fully recompensed, for all the Labours of his Life, and all the Sorrows of his Death, when Sinners are washed from their Guilt in his Blood, and presented faultless by his Obedience.

The HOLY SPIRIT is equally pleased with this great Transaction, and its noble Effects. It is his peculiar Office, and favourite Employ, to *convince* the World of their SAVIOUR's Righteousness. Not only that his Nature was spotlessly pure, and his Conversation perfectly holy; but that from both results a Righteousness, of infinite Dignity, and everlasting Efficacy: sufficient, throughout all Ages sufficient, for the Acceptance and Salvation of the most unworthy Creatures.

Since then, this Method of Acceptance and Salvation, is excellent and glorious, in the Eyes of the adorable TRINITY—Since it magnifies the Law, and yields the most exalted Honour to its divine AUTHOR—Since it makes ample Provision for the Holiness of a *corrupt*, and the Happiness of a *ruined* World—Why should my Friend any longer dislike it; oppose it; or treat it with a cold Indifference?

rence? Surely, all these grand Recommendations, are enough to over-rule any little Objections, which may arise from the Suspicions of Timidity, or may be started by the Artifices of Sophistry.

Ther. I know not how it is, *Aspasio*; but I cannot reconcile myself to this Doctrine of imputed Righteousness: notwithstanding all the Pains You have taken, to make me a Convert.

Asp. The Disappointment is mine, but the Loss is yours, *Theron*.—However, let me intreat You, not to reject my Sentiments absolutely, nor to condemn them prematurely. Suppose it *possible* at least, that they *may* be true; and weigh them in an even Balance.—Learn Wisdom from your *Aspasio's* Folly. I was once exactly in your Situation; saw Things in your Light, and through your Medium.

Conversing, I well remember, with a devout but plain Person, our Discourse happened to turn upon that solemn Admonition; *If any Man will come after ME, let Him deny Himself**. I was haranguing upon the Import and Extent of the Duty. Shewing, that merely to forbear the infamous Action, is little. We must deny Admittance, deny Entertainment at least, to the evil *Imagination*; and quench even the in-

X 2

kindling

* *Matt.* xvi. 24.

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X 2

kindling

* *Matt.* xvi. 24.

kindling Spark of irregular Desire.—When I had shot a random Bolt, my honest Friend replied; “There is another Instance of Self-denial, to which this Injunction extends, and which is of very great Moment in the Christian Religion. I mean, the Instance of renouncing our own Strength, and our own Righteousness; not leaning on *that*, for Holdings; nor relying on *this*, for Justification.”—I thought the old Man, I must confess, little better than a superstitious Dotard; and wondered at (what I then fancied) the motley Mixture of Piety and Oddity in his Notions. But now I discern Sense, Solidity, and Truth in his Observation*. Now I perceive, that We ourselves are often the Dreamers, when We imagine Others to be fast asleep.

Ther. I shall not forget your Caution, and will endeavour to avoid the Rock, on which my *Aspasio* struck; but happily, it seems, escaped Shipwreck.—You may likewise assure Yourself, that, upon a Subject of exceeding great and eternal Consequence, I shall not fail to use the most attentive and impartial Consideration. An *indolent* Supineness, or a *bi-*
gotted

* *Milton* thought the same, otherwise he would never have put those Words into the Mouth of a *divine* Speaker.

—*Thy Merit,*

*Imputed shall absolve them, who renounce
Their own, both righteous and unrighteous, Deeds:
And live in Thee transplanted, and from Thee
Receive new Life.*

B. III. 290

DIALOGUE XIV. 325

gotted Obstinacy, in this great Crisis of Affairs, would be of all Errors the most *inexcusable*, and must prove of all Miscarriages the most *fatal*.

Ass. But still *You cannot reconcile Yourself—* And no Wonder. For this Way of Salvation runs directly counter to the Stream of corrupt Nature. It puzzles our Reason, and offends our Pride. What? shall We, not work, but *believe unto Righteousness* *? Shall We receive all *freely*, and reckon Ourselves no better than *unprofitable* Servants! This is a Method, which We should never submit to; this is a Proposal, which We should always spurn; were not our Sentiments rectified, and our Hearts new moulded, by sovereign Grace.

Let me remind You of a little Incident, which You must have read in the *Grecian* History. A certain Stranger came, one Day, to dine with some *Lacedæmonians*. They, You know, always sat down at a public Table, and were content with the plainest Food. The Gentleman, accustomed to higher Eating, could not forbear expressing his Disgust, at the *homely* Provision.—Sir, said the Cook, You don't make use of the *Sauce*.—What do You mean? replied the Guest.—You do not use hard Exercise; nor habituate Yourself to long Abstinence; nor bring a sharpened Appetite to the Meal.

X 3

* *Rom. x. 10.*

326 DIALOGUE XIV.

Meal.—And You, my dear Friend, I am apprehensive, have not the Sauce; have not the proper Preparative for this salutary Doctrine; which is indeed the Bread of Life, and the very Marrow of the Gospel.

Ther. What Preparative?

Assp. A Sense of your great Depravity, your extreme Guilt, and your utterly undone Condition.—While *destitute* of these Convictions, our Souls will be like *the full Stomach*, that *lothes even the Honeycomb*.—So long as these Convictions are *slight*, and *hover* only in the Imagination; We shall be like *Gallio**, listless, indif-

* *Acts* xviii. 17. A late Commentator, of distinguished Eminence, has attempted to vindicate *Gallio's* Conduct; and would represent it, as an amiable Instance of *Prudence* and *Moderation*.

To me this *Roman* Magistrate seems to have acted a Part, both irreligious and unjust.—*Irreligious*, because He refused to hear the Apostle's Defence; which was the most likely Means of his Conversion and Salvation. As one great End, why Providence permitted the Preachers of the Gospel to be brought before *Rulers and Kings*, was, that such an Incident might serve *εἰς μαρτυρίαν αὐτοῖς*, *Matt.* x. 18. *for a Testimony* (not *against*, but) *to them*. That even the Potentates of the Earth, prejudiced and supercilious as they were, might hereby have an Opportunity, of hearing the *Christian* Doctrine, and seeing its Efficacy on the Spirits of Men.—*Unjust*, because He permitted *Sosthenes*, then an innocent Man, afterwards a Disciple of *CHRIST*, (*1 Cor.* i. 1.) to be so illegally treated, and outrageously abused, without interposing for his Rescue.

Besides; if the *HOLY SPIRIT* intended to fix a Mark of *Approbation*, rather than a Brand of *Infamy*, upon the *Proconsul's* Behaviour; I cannot but think, it would have been expressed in a Manner, different from—*καὶ οὐδὲν τῷ τῷ Γαλλιῶνι ἐμείλεν*. Which, if it be the Language of *Applause*,

indifferent, and *caring for None of these Things*.—But when they are *deep*, and *penetrate* the Heart; then the Righteousness of a REDEEMER will be sweet, tasteful, and inviting. As Myrrh and Frankincense to the Smell; as Milk and Honey to the Palate; as Gold and Treasures to the ruined Bankrupt.

Tber. What Method would You advise me to use, in order to get these Convictions impressed on my Heart?

Asp. Endeavour to understand GOD's holy Law. Consider, how pure, how extensive, how sublimely perfect it is.—Then, judge of your spiritual State, not from the *flattering* Suggestions of Self-love, nor from the *defective* Examples of your Fellow-creatures, but by this *unerring* Standard of the Sanctuary.—Above all, beseech the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, to send his inlightening SPIRIT into your Soul. For indeed, without the inlightening Influences of the SPIRIT, We may have the divine Law in our Hand; We may comprehend its grammatical Meaning; yet be like blind *Bartimeus* under the meridian Sun. It is the blessed SPIRIT alone, who can rend the Veil of Ignorance from our Minds; and shew Us, either “the
“wonder-
plause, requires some more than ordinary Skill in Criticism, to understand it aright. But, if it be the Voice of Censure, is obvious and intelligible to every Reader.

"wonderful Things of GOD's Law," or the glorious Myſteries of his Goſpel. In this Senſe, our polite Poet * ſpeaks a Truth, as ſingularly important, as it is elegantly expreſſed :

*He from thick Films ſhall purge the viſual Ray,
And on the fightleſs Eye-balls pour the Day.*

Will You give me Leave to propoſe another Expedient? Which, I believe, may be conſiderably ſerviceable in this particular Caſe. Which, I am aſſured, will be greatly advantageous in many other Reſpects.

Ther. Backward as I am to adopt your Doctrine, I am no Enemy to my own Intereſt. Therefore, ſhall not only give You Leave to propoſe, but give You Thanks for communicating, ſo valuable an Advice.

Aſp. It is, in Reality, none of mine. It was long ago recommended by your old Acquaintance *Horace* †. It conſiſts in *Keeping a Diary*.

Compile a ſecret Hiſtory of your Heart and Conduct. — Take notice of the Manner, in which your *Time* is ſpent; and of the Strain, that runs through your *Diſcourſe*. How often the former is loſt in Trifles, how often the latter

* Mr. Pope, in his charming Poem ſtyled *The Meſſiah*.

† *Ille velut fidis Arcana Sodalibus olim
Credabat Libris; neque ſi male ceſſerat uſquam
Decurrens alio, neque ſi bene: quo fit, ut omnis
Votivâ pateat veluti deſcripta Tabella
Vita Senis.*

Horat. Sat.

latter evaporates in Vanity.—Attend to the *Principle* from which your Actions flow; whether from the steady habitual Love of GOD, or from some rambling Impulse, and a customary Propensity to please Yourself?—Minute down your Sins of *Omission*. How frequently You neglect to glorify your CREATOR, to edify your Fellow-creatures; and to improve Yourself in Knowledge and Holiness.—Observe the Frame of your Spirit in *religious Duties*. With what Reluctance they are undertaken, and with what Indevotion performed; with how many Wanderings of Thought, and how much Dulness of Desire.—How often, in the common Affairs of Life, You feel the inordinate Sallies of Passion, the Workings of evil Concupiscence, or the Intrusion of foolish Imaginations.

Register those *secret* Faults, to which None but your own Conscience is privy, and which None but the all-seeing Eye discerns.—Often review these interesting Memoirs. Frequently contemplate Yourself in this faithful Mirrour.—An Artist, sometime ago, took a *Survey* of your Estate. Drew the Form, and measured the Dimensions, of each Inclosure. Pictured out every Hedge, and scarce omitted a single Tree, that grew upon the Premises.—Act thus with your Will, your Understanding, your Affections. These are your noble *inter-*
nal

nal Demefne. Of which None but Yourself can be a competent Surveyor.

Ther. It is unreasonable and preposterous, I must acknowledge, to be minutely exact in meaner Matters, and use no Accuracy of Inspection in the most momentous Affairs. To have a correct Draught of our Lands, which are a *transient* Inheritance; and no Map of that *everlasting* Possession, the Soul.

Asp. Gratify me then, my dear *Theron*, in this Particular. As I purpose to set out very early in the Morning, I shall insist upon it; that You do not rise before your usual Time, in order to compliment my Departure. But I now make it my *last* Wish, and my *parting* Request, that You will, for some Months at least, keep a Diary.

You have wondered at my Opinion, concerning the Corruption of our Nature, and the Insufficiency of our Righteousness. This may seem strange, this may appear shocking, to a Mind *unacquainted* with itself. But, when You have searched your Heart, by this Probe; when You have felt the Pulse of your Soul, by Self-examination; then, You will be better able to judge of my Sentiments, and enter into the Reasons of my Faith.

By this means, We shall also discover the Sins, that most easily beset Us; which most frequently elude our Vigilance, and baffle our
Resolu-

Resolution. We shall learn, *how* to post our Guard; *when* to exercise the strictest Watch; and *where* to direct the Artillery of Prayer.— In a Word; We shall learn, better than from ten thousand Volumes, to KNOW OURSELVES. A Knowledge, which was supposed, by the ancient Philosophers, to descend from Heaven*; and which, I believe, our *Christian* Divines will allow, has a happy Tendency to lead People thither. Because, of all other Preparatives, it best disposes them for that blessed REDEEMER, who is the Way, the only Way to those blissful Mansions.

Now I have mentioned a *Way*, let me suppose You traveling through an unknown Country. You come to a Place, where the Road divides itself into two equally inviting Parts. You are at a loss, which Track to pursue. Whose Direction will you choose to follow? That Man's, who has passed through *neither* of them? That Man's, who has passed through *one* of them only? Or that Man's, who has passed and repassed through them *both*?—To wait for an Answer, would be an Affront to your Judgment. Only let me observe, that the last is your *Aspasio's* Case. He has traveled long and proceeded far, even in *your* Path. All that Circumspection and Affiduity, all that Prayer and Self-denial, all that Fasting and Alms

* ——— *E Cælo descendit, γυνὴ, εἰσαγ' οὐ.* Juven.

Alms and every other Means of Grace could do, in order to establish a Righteousness of his own, has been done. But to no Purpose.— He has also trod every Step in the Way, which he recommends to his beloved Friend. He has made the Tryal, and can set his *Probatum est*, to every Expedient which He advises. And may very truly say, with his divine MASTER, *We speak that We do know**, and testify that We have experienced. Or, with the evangelical Prophet, *This is the Way*, the Way of Peace, of Holiness, and of Joy, *walk ye in it*†.

Ther. I am sorry to observe, that the Night is coming on, and our Conversation almost at an End. My Regret is increased, by the Consideration of your intended Journey.—Though Business obliges You to *depart*; it will, I hope, afford You Leisure to *write*. This will be some Compensation for the Want of your Company.

Yonder Sun is sinking below the Horizon, and just taking leave of our Earth. To *retard* the departing Radiance, at least to *alleviate* the approaching Loss, those western Clouds catch the Rays; and reflect them to our View, in a most amusing Diversity of Colours. By this means, We enjoy the great Luminary in *his Beams*, even when *his Orb* is with-

* *John* iii. 11.

† *Isaiah* xxx. 21.

withdrawn from our Sight.—An epistolary Intercourse has something of the same Nature. Letters may be called, the Talk of absent Friends. By this Expedient, they communicate their Thoughts, even though Countries, Kingdoms, or Seas intercept their Speech. You must, therefore, promise me this Satisfaction; and let me converse with my *Aspasio* by the *Pen*, when I can no longer have an Interview with Him in *Person*.

Asp. You have anticipated me, *Theron*. Otherwise, what is now my Promise, would have been my Request.

I cannot but take notice of another Particularity, in that magnificent Assemblage of Clouds. How they varied their Appearance, as the Lamp of Day changed its Situation.—A little while ago, those Curtains of the Sky, were streaked with Orange, or tinged with Amber. Presently, they borrow the Blush of the Rose, or the softened Red of the Pink. Ere long, they glow with Vermilion, or deepen into Crimson. Soon succeeds the purple-tinctured Robe of Majesty; and as soon (thus transient is all sublunary Grandeur!) gives place to the *sable Veil* of Evening, or the *gloomy Pall* of Night.—Such, I trust, will be the Issue of my *Theron's* present Apprehensions. All his splendid Ideas of human Excellency
and

and Self-righteousness, will become faint; will lose their imaginary Lustre; till, at length, they darken into deep *Self-abasement*.—Then, the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS will be amiable, will be desirable, as the Beauties of the Dawn, breaking upon the Shades of Night.





A
S E R I E S
O F
L E T T E R S.

L E T T E R I.

ASPASIO to THERON.

Dear THERON,

I AM now at the Seat of my worthy Friend *Camillus*; where Business and Inclination will fix me for some Weeks.—This Evening we had a most pleasing Ramble. I have met with nothing so agreeable, since I left your House, and lost your Company.

The

The Time was just arrived, and the Scene was fully opened, which furnished our great Poet with his fine Description ;

*Now was the Sun in western Cadence low,
From Noon ; and gentle Airs, due at their Hour,
To fan the Earth now wak'd, and usher in
The Evening cool.*

At this Juncture, *Camillus* invited me to take the Air.—We walked, several Times, along a close shady Alley, arched with the Foliage of *Filberds*. Here, hid from every Eye, and the whole World withdrawn from our View, We seemed like *Monks* strolling in their Cloysters.—Turning short at the End, We enter a parallel Range of majestic and uniformly spreading *Walnut Trees*. Which was somewhat like advancing through a low Porch, into the Isles of a magnificent *Cathedral*. The broad Leaf, and large Trunk of those lordly Trees—their very diffusive Spread, added to their prodigious Height—give them an Air of uncommon Dignity. It swells the Imagination with vast Ideas, and entertains it with a romantic Kind of Delight, to expatiate amidst such huge Columns, and under such superb Elevations, of living Architecture.

Quitting our Cathedral, We turn once again, and pass into a grand Colonade of *Oaks* : so regular in their Situation, so similar in their Size,

Size, and so remarkably correspondent in every Circumstance, that they looked like the *Twins* of Nature; not only belonging to the same Family, but produced at the same Birth.—Through these lay a Walk, strait, spacious, and gracefully long. Far exceeding the last in the Extent of its Area, though much inferior in the Stateliness of its Cieling. It put me in mind of that divine Benignity, which has allowed Us *six* Days, for the Prosecution of our own comparatively low Affairs; and set apart but *one*, for the more immediate Attendance on the sublime Exercises of Devotion:

This Walk was covered with the neatest *Gravel*; and not a Weed to be seen, nor one Spire of Grass, through the whole extended Surface. It stole into a continual Ascent; yet so very gradually, that the Rise was scarce discernable, either by the searching Eye, the toiling Feet, or the panting Breath.—At the Extremity, a handsome *Summer-house* shewed a Flight of Steps, and half a *Venetian* Door. The rest of the Building was hid by the clustering Branches.

As soon as We enter the Apartment, *Camillus* throws open the Left-hand Sash; and, with it, a most enlarged and amusive *Prospect*.—The Structure appeared situate on the Brow of a considerable Eminence. Whose Sides were partly confused and wild with broken

Rocks, partly shagged and perplexed with thorny Shrubs. The Spectator is agreeably surpris'd, to find Himself accommodated with so *elegant* a Mansion, on the Summit of so *rude* and *ruinous* a Spot.—But, how greatly is his Surprise and his Satisfaction augmented, when he casts his Eye forward; and beholds the beautiful *Meads*, which, from the Foot of this ragged Hill, stretch themselves into a Space almost unmeasurable!

Through the midst of this extensive Vale, which was decked with the finest Verdure, and replenished with the richest Herbage, a *River* rolled its copious Flood. Rolled in a thousand serpentine *Meanders*, as though it had lost its Way in the flowery Labyrinth, or made repeated Efforts of flowing back to its Source.—Till, at last, having wandered more than twice the Length of the Meadows; having held a Mirror to the aspiring Poplars, and bending Willows; having paid a welcome Salute to several ornamented *Villas*, and passed through the Arches of two or three curiously pendent Bridges; it seem'd to meet the Sky, and mingle with the Horizon.

Opposite to the Front Window, a *Cascade* fell from the adjacent Stream. It flash'd and foamed along a broad Slope, indented with small Pits, and jagged with protuberant Stones. The Current, vexed and embarrassed, seem'd
to

to *rove* at the intervening Obstacles; and forcing its rapid, indignant, sonorous Way, struck the Ear with a Peal of liquid Thunder. These fretful Waters——let our *angry* Passions observe the Admonition, and follow the Example——soon were pacified; soon forgot to chide. Collected into a little Rivulet, they ran off in calm and silent Lapse, till they lost themselves amongst Beds of Osier, and Plantations of Alder.

The River, widening as it flowed, was parted here and there by several little Islands. Some tufted with *Reeds*, and the Resort of Swans. Some, adorned with stately *Porticos*, and splendid *Alcoves*, the graceful Retreats of rural Pleasure. Some, furnished with green imbowering Walks, fitted for studious Retirement and sedate Contemplation.—On either Side of the charming Valley, Towns and Villages lay thick and looked gay; adding Ornament and Variety to the Scene, and receiving innumerable Advantages from the passing Wave.

The Whole recalled to an attentive Observer's Mind, that amiable and august Spectacle, which the *Syrian* * Soothsayer could not behold, without a Rapture of Delight;—*From the Top of the Rocks I see the Tribes of JEHOVAH, and from the Hills I behold the Habitations of his chosen People. How goodly are*

Y 2

thy

* Numb. xxiii. 7.

thy Tents, O Jacob! And thy Tabernacles, O Israel! As the Vallies, are they spread forth; as Gardens, by the Rivers Side: as Trees of exquisite Fragrance*, which the LORD hath planted: as Cedars of stateliest Growth, flourishing beside the Waters.

We had but just looked about Us, when a Messenger came for Camillus. As He was called to settle some private Affairs, I chose to stay in this inviting Retreat; and determined to make myself amends for the Loss of Camillus's Company, by beginning a Correspondence with my Theron.—We have Pen, Ink, and Paper in all our rural Retirements; that, if any Thing is started in Discourse, or occurs in Meditation, worthy to be remembered, it may immediately be committed to Writing.

I could not but observe to my Friend, that, fine as the Prospect appeared, there was one Decoration wanting; if some *grand Deformity* may be called a Decoration. The Ridges of a bleak and barren Mountain, or the Skirts of a Sun-burnt tawny Heath, would give *additional Liveliness*, to the ornamented Parts of the

* Numb. xxiv. 5, 6. It is well known that the Word **סִמְלָה** is used in the sacred Writings, to denote either a *delightful Perfume*, Prov. vii. 17. or that fine *aromatic Plant*, which produces it, Cantic. iv. 14.—For which Reason, I think it very justifiable, to render the Expression, *Trees of exquisite Fragrance*; and am persuaded, it will be far more intelligible to the Generality of Readers, than *Trees of Ligu-Aloes*.

the Landſchape, and make their Beauties ſtrike with double Vigour.—This alſo, by ſhewing what wretched inhospitable Quarters might have been aſſigned Us, would awaken in our Hearts a *more fervent* Gratitude to the ſupreme DISPOSER of Things; who has caſt our “ Lot in a fairer Ground, and given us a “ more goodly Heritage.”

So, a proper Knowledge of the divine *Law*—of its ſublime Perfections, and rigorous Sanction—joined with a Conviction of our own extreme Deficiency, and manifold Tranſgreſſions—all this would indear the bleſſed *JESUS* to our Affections, and powerfully recommend his Righteouſneſs to our Deſires.—The Remainder of this Epistle, therefore, ſhall turn upon ſome Inſtances of Duty, enjoined in that ſacred System. *By which* it may be highly uſeful to examine our Conduct, and ſift our Hearts: *in which*, I believe, we have all fallen ſhort, and are all become guilty: *from which*, We may learn the Imperfection of our beſt Services, and ſee the inexpressible Need of a better Righteouſneſs than our own.

The Knowledge of GOD is the Foundation of all vital Religion, and indeed is the Conſummation of human Happineſs. It is not only Matter of preſent Duty, but the very Eſſence of our future Blis; *This is Life eternal,*

to know Thee the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom Thou hast sent *.—Yet, important and obligatory as it is, are We not very defective in this divine Science? Have We duly acquainted Ourselves with the marvelous Excellencies of the LORD JEHOVAH? His uncontrollable Power, and all-comprehending Wisdom; his unbounded Goodness, and unwearied Patience; his immaculate Holiness, and inflexible Justice; his never-failing Faithfulness, and inviolable Veracity?—Have We, according to the Direction of our *inspired* Tutor, pursued this sacred Study on our Knees †; and sought this most noble of all intellectual Endowments, not merely from Books, but principally at the Throne of Grace. Have We sought it, like that antient *Jewish* Student, with an early Application, and with incessant Affiduity; even “from the Flower, till the Grape was ripe ‡?”

Is that scanty Ray of Knowledge, which perhaps has forced itself through our original Darkness, *operative* on our Affections? Have We loved the LORD our GOD with all our Heart? This is the first and great Commandment ||.—Have We constantly entertained the most magnificent and honourable Thoughts of his sublime Perfections? Is our Esteem for this

* *John* xvii. 3.
|| *Matt.* xxii. 38.

† *James* i. 5.

‡ *Ecclesi.* li. 15.

this immensely great and most blessed BEING, high, superlative, matchless? somewhat like that, expressed by the Psalmist; *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is None upon Earth, that I desire in comparison of Thee* *.—Have we been affectionately concerned for his *Glory*, and zealous to advance his holy Religion? Troubled, very sensibly troubled, when our MAKER's Honour has been trampled in the Dust, by licentious Tongues, or flagitious Deeds?

Have We made it our ruling Care, to approve the Whole of our Life, and the most secret Transactions of our Breast, to his all-seeing Eye? Resolved, deliberately resolved to sacrifice, not only our darling Lusts, but even our most valuable Interests, whenever they stand in competition with the good Pleasure of his Will?—In a Word; as the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, with such *vehement and inextinguishable Ardour*, have We thirsted after—a brighter Manifestation of his Perfections—some sweeter Assurances of his Love—and an ever-increasing Conformity to his Image?

Such was the Temper of those excellent Men, who are characterized in the Scriptures of Truth, as Children of the HIGHEST, and Patterns for our Imitation. This is their Language; *The Desire of our Soul is unto thy Name*

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and

* Psalm lxxiii. 25.

and the Remembrance of Thee. With my Soul have I desired Thee in the Night; yea, with my Spirit within me will I seek Thee early*.—Neither is such Warmth of Love, and Fervour of Desire, any needless or extravagant Pitch of Devotion; but a *reasonable* Service, indispensibly due, from all intelligent Creatures, to the great AUTHOR of their Being—in whom all possible Perfections, with the utmost Exaltation and Glory, reside—from whom all Manner of Blessings, in the most copious and never-failing Communications, flow.

When We receive, from an absent *Friend*, rich and repeated Presents; Casks of generous Wine, or Jars of delicious Fruit; We feel Ourselves inkindled into a grateful Affection. We honour, We love the Person, who allows Us such a distinguished Place in his Heart; and expresses his cordial Regard, by such a Series of active and tender Benevolence.—The blessed GOD is a Friend to Us All, infinitely

power-
 * *Isai.* xxvi. 8, 9. We can hardly tell, which to admire most, the *Beauty* of the Description, or the *Piety* of the Persons. *I have desired*; and not with inactive Wishes, but such as prompt to vigorous Endeavours, *I will seek Thee*. And *early*, with the most vigilant Application and unwearyed Affiduity.—The Emphasis is very much increased, by the Addition of those lively Words, *with my Soul, yea with my Spirit*; with the whole Bent and Sway of my Affections, and with the steady invariable Determination of my Judgment.—Thus *have I desired Thee, even in the Night*; when both the Pursuits and the Thoughts of other People, are sunk and lost in profound Repose. Thus *will I seek Thee*, with a Zeal—*early* as the rising—*constant* as the returning Sun.

powerful, and equally munificent. We are the constant Objects of his *more than* friendly, of his parental Cares. Every passing Moment is a Messenger of his Patience, and charged with some Token of his Bounty. For *our* Sake, He has diffused Blessings over all the Face of the Earth; and commanded every Element to concur, in ministering to our Accommodation. He has not only adapted his Benefits to our several Wants; but has given them a *Diversification*, large as the Scope of our Wishes; and an *Enrichment*, far beyond all that our Fancy could conceive. — Profuse Liberality! Yet small and scanty, compared with his Mercies in *CHRIST JESUS*.

What? If GOD, willing to manifest the super-abundant Riches of his Kindness, had made bare the Arm of his Omnipotence; and struck a most miraculous Road through the Surges of the Ocean, to afford Us a safe Passage? — If, to accommodate Us in our Travels, He had brought Waters out of the flinty Rock; and bid the Ravens bring Meat to our Hands, bid the Winds convey Manna to our Doors? — If, to furnish us with a commodious Settlement, He had dethroned mighty Kings, dispossessed populous Nations, and made the Walls of impregnable Cities fall to the Ground? — If, to further the Dispatch of our Business, or facilitate the Conquest of our Enemies, He had

had arrested the Sun in his meridian Career, and laid an Embargo upon the Moon, setting out on her nightly Tour?—In short, if to promote our Welfare, He had suspended the Powers, and controuled the Laws of universal Nature; had wrought *all* the Miracles, exhibited in the Land of *Egypt*, or recorded in the Volumes of Inspiration—should We not think Ourselves under the most inviolable Engagements, to love the LORD our GOD, *Who had done so great Things for Us*;—to love Him unfeignedly and ardently;—to love Him with a supreme Affection, far above every other amiable Object?—Yet, We have greater, incomparably greater Obligations to our Almighty BENEFACTOR. For (hear O Heavens! wonder O Earth! and let Eternity dwell upon the stupendous Truth!) GOD spared not his SON—his own SON—his transcendently glorious and divinely excellent SON—but delivered him up to the deepest Humiliation and to the most accursed Death, *for Us* Men and our Salvation.

O, Theron! Have We been impressed with Wonder, at the Contemplation of this Goodness? Have our Hearts glowed with Gratitude, under a Sense of these Mercies? Surely, No Man need be convicted of any other Crime, at the great Tribunal, than Insensibility of such Love, and Ingratitude for such Favours.

This,

This, without the Accession of horrid Impieties, is enough to leave Him absolutely inexcusable. This is enough to prove Him one of the most *disingenuous*, and *detestable* of Creatures.

Have We exercised Ourselves in frequent *Thanksgiving*? Many are the Exhortations to this honourable Duty. *Praise thy GOD, O Zion* * : *Praise Him for his mighty Acts* † :—*Praise Him according to his excellent Greatness* ‡ .—Innumerable are the Incitements to abound in this pleasant Service. Every Comfort has a Voice, and cries in the Ear of Reason; *O! that Men would therefore praise the LORD for his Goodness*. Every Deliverance inforces the Address, and furnishes fresh Materials for the heavenly Employ.—The Man after GOD's own Heart declares, as an inviting Example for our Practice; *I will bless the LORD at all Times: His Praise shall continually be in my Mouth*;

* Psalm cxlvii. 12.

† Psalm cl. 2.

‡ Among these Exhortations We may rank that beautiful and noble Address to GOD, *יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה* Psalm xxii. 3. *Thou that inhabitest*—Light inaccessible, shall I say? The Regions of Immenity, or the Ages of Eternity? No; but what is a more exalted Character—*The Praises of Israel*. Finely signifying, that this is a most acceptable Sacrifice; to which the Divine MAJESTY attends with the greatest Delight.—Intimating also, that the Exercise of Praise should not be an occasional Thing, like a *transient Visit* to a Stranger's House; but a daily and almost unintermitted Service, like the *stated Residence* of a Person in his own Habitation.

Mouth^a: *Yea, as long as I have any Being, I will sing Praises unto my GOD* †.—Indeed, when We consider the inexhaustibly rich Bounty of GOD our CREATOR, and the inconceivably tender Mercy of GOD our REDEEMER, it is both strange and deplorable, that the Love of GOD is not always prevailing in our Hearts, and the Language of Praise ever flowing from our Lips.

I will not suppose our Character so irreligious, that We have neglected the daily Worship of GOD, either in our Closet, or in our Family.—But, have we prayed with that profound *reverential Awe*, which is due to the HIGH and LOFTY ONE *that inhabiteth Eternity*?—Have We made our Supplications with that *fervent Importunity*, which may in some measure correspond with the extreme Indigence of our State, and the invaluable Worth of the Blessings We crave?—Have our Petitions been attended with that *steady Affiance*, which may glorify the Goodness, the Power, the Veracity of the LORD? May evidently declare, That He is rich in Mercy, to All them that call upon Him †: that He is the LORD JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting Strength ||: that He is the GOD of Truth, and faithful for ever §. We call Him FATHER; but have We

^a Psalm xxxiv. 1.

† Psalm cxlvi. 2.

‡ Rom. x. 12.

|| Isai. xxvi. 4.

§ Deut. vii. 9.

We trusted in Him, with that unsuspecting, chearful, filial Confidence, which a Child reposes on the Fidelity and Indulgence of an earthly Relative? Have We not entertained, too often entertained, narrow, dishonourable, beggarly Apprehensions, concerning the Treasures of his Liberality, and the Bowels of his Pity? Rating them even lower than our Parent's, our Friend's, or our own?

Have We been careful to carry the Spirit of our Prayers into our *ordinary* Conversation; and waited at the Door, as well as approached to the Throne of Grace—Amidst the Intervals of our solemn Devotions, have We cultivated an *ejaculatory* Intercourse with Heaven? How highly would the ambitious Courtier prize, and how frequently would He use a privy Key, that should give Him, at all Hours, free Admittance to his Sovereign. This Key of Admittance, only to an infinitely more exalted POTENTATE, We all possess in the Practice of mental Aspirations to GOD.—It is certainly the noblest Employ, and will be the richest Improvement of our Thoughts, to send them in such short Embassies to the KING of Kings; and to derive, by such occasional Sallies * of Faith,

* We have, in Scripture, very remarkable Instances of the Success, which has attended *ejaculatory Prayer*.—Observe *Nehemiah*: He stands before *Ahasuerus*, apprehensive of the Monarch's Displeasure, yet desirous to solicit Him in Behalf of

Faith, a renewed Supply from the Fountain of all Good. How great a *Loss* then must it be

of *Jerusalem*. To be delivered from his Fears, and to obtain his Desires, what Method does He use? The mean and servile Arts of Flattery? No; but the manly and devout Expedient of Prayer. *I prayed*, says the Patriot, *to the GOD of Heaven*.—We cannot suppose, that He fell on His Knees, or spoke with His Lips, while He continued in the royal Presence. But he darted up his Soul in *silent* Supplication. Which Supplication “pierced the Clouds;” reached the eternal Throne; and returned not again till a Blessing was sent. Such as totally averted the Wrath, He dreaded; and procured Favour and Assistance, much larger than He expected. *Nebem. ii. 4.*

When *David* heard, that *Ahitophel*, the ablest Politician in his Kingdom, was revolted to *Absalom*; sensible what a Loss his Affairs had sustained, and what an Advantage the rebellious Party had acquired, He betook himself to his GOD. He staid not for an Opportunity of Retirement, but instantly and upon the Spot cried; *O LORD, I pray Thee, turn the Counsel of Ahitophel into Foolishness!*—A short Address, but very efficacious. HE, who disappointeth the Devices of the Crafty, sent a Spirit of Infatuation among the Rebels; and inclined them to reject the Advice of that judicious Statesman. Which false Step brought upon their horrid Enterprize, the Ruin it deserved; and chagrined the wretched Traitor, even to Rage, Phrenzy, and Suicide. *2 Sam. xv. 31. xvii. 23.*

Amyntor, at a memorable Period of his Life, was under great Distress of Conscience, and harassed by violent Temptations. He made his Case known to an experienced Friend; who said, *Amyntor, You do not pray*.—Surprised at this, He replied; “I pray, if such a Thing be possible, too much. “I can hardly tell, how many Times in the Day, I bow “my Knee before GOD; almost to the Omission of my “other Duties, and the Neglect of my necessary Studies.” —“You mistake my Meaning, dear *Amyntor*. I do not “refer You to the Ceremony of the *Knee*, but to the Devotion of the *Heart*. Which neglects not *any* Business, “but intermingles Prayer with *all*. Which, in every Place, “looks unto the LORD; and, on every Occasion, lifts “up an indigent longing Soul for the Supply of his Grace.

“ This

be to our spiritual Interests, and how contemptuous a *Disregard* of the ever present JEHOVAH, to omit intirely, or long to discontinue, this most beneficial Practice of habitual Adoration?—Can You, my dear *Theron*, acquit Yourself on this Article of Inquiry? Has not every Day of your Life been a Day of Negligence in this Respect? Been a perpetual Disobedience to our SAVIOUR's Injunction; *Men ought, in this Manner, always to pray, and not to faint* *.

Have We sanctified the *Sabbath*? Has the LORD's Day, with all its solemn and sacred Offices, been our Delight? Have We remembered that distinguished Portion of our Time, as *Jacob* remembered the delightful Interview at *Peniel*? Have We expected it, as Merchants expect the Arrival of a richly laden Vessel? Have We improved it, as Husbandmen improve the shining Hours of the Harvest? Have We wholly laid aside every earthly Engagement; *not speaking our own Words* †, nor allowing Ourselves in any Gratifications, that may obstruct our Progress in Grace, or interrupt our Communion with the FATHER of Spirits?

“ This (added He, and spoke with a peculiar Vehemence) *this is the Prayer, which all the Devils in Hell cannot withstand.*”—This, I would farther observe, is the Prayer, which brings down somewhat of *Heaven* into the Heart; in which I would myself desire to abound; and would earnestly recommend, to all my Acquaintance, and all my Readers.

* *Luke* xviii. 1.

† *Isaiab* lviii. 13.

Spirits?—Has one Day in his Courts been preferable to a Thousand *, spent in the most admired Scenes of Amusement? Has our Soul been filled as it were with Marrow and Fatness †, when our Mouth has been employed, in praising his exalted MAJESTY, or blessing his condescending Goodness?—Have the Memorials of our REDEEMER's dying Merits, and the Seals of his unchangeable Loving-kindness, been relished as a Feast, and prized as a Portion?

Have We honoured GOD's holy *Word*?—What greater Mark of Disesteem, than to despise a Person's Discourse; and not to think his Speech worthy of our Notice? Especially, when He addresses Us with very great Seriousness, and with the utmost Affection. In our Bible, the GOD of Glory speaks to his Creatures; speaks with the most persuasive Energy, and with all the Yearnings of parental Tenderness. Have We listened to our CREATOR, with Reverence and Delight; and rejoiced with Tremblings at—*Thus saith the LORD*?

Have We searched the Oracles of Truth, not merely as *Scholars*, but as *Sinners*; not from a Spirit of Curiosity, or with an Air of Formality, but with a Solicitude and Ardour, becoming Persons, who inquire after the SAVIOUR of their lost Souls? Have We sub-

mitted

* *Psalms* lxxxiv. 10.

† *Psalms* lxiii. 5.

mitted our inmost Thoughts to their impartial Scrutiny; to receive Conviction of Sin from their awful Remonstrances, and to hear the Sentence of Condemnation at their righteous Bar?—Have We been willing to suffer the Reproach of *conscious Baseness*, while they have ripped up the Disguises of Falshood; laid open our secret Iniquities; and brought all our evil Ways to Remembrance? Thus *Josiah* acted. *His Heart was tender, and He humbled Himself before the LORD; He rent his Clothes, and wept before the LORD, when He heard the Words of the Book of the Law* *.

Have We *bid* the glad Tidings of the Gospel, as an inestimable Treasure, within our Hearts? And been careful to make it *our own*, by concomitant Meditation, and subsequent Prayer?—Have We valued the precious Promises, as Gentlemen of Wealth value the Writings of their private Estates; or as enfranchised Bodies esteem the Charter of their public Privileges?—Have We, like the princely Patriarch, longed for those Words of Edification, Exhortation, and Comfort, more than for our necessary Food †? And, like the royal Prophet, prevented the Night-watches, that We may be occupied in those Statutes ‡ and Ordinances of Heaven?

We

* 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27.

† Job xxiii. 12.

‡ Psalm cxix. 148.

We have hitherto confined the Examination, to a few Instances of the *affirmative* Kind; how dreadfully will the dark Account be swelled, if, instead of Love and Obedience, there be Hatred and Opposition — *Hatred* of the Name, Glory, and Worship of GOD — *Opposition* to his Interest, Kingdom, and Service!

GOD is *infinite Perfection*: worthy of all Admiration: exalted above all Praise. Yet do not our Thoughts more frequently, or more naturally turn upon our own Accomplishments, than upon the adorable and shining Attributes of the ALMIGHTY? This is, in itself, the most shameful *Dotage*; and, in GOD's Sight, the most abominable *Idolatry*. Yet, let Us observe what passes within, and We shall probably find, that as Damps arise in the Mines, or Fogs in the fenny Grounds, so naturally and so copiously do these over-weening Reflections arise in our depraved Minds.

GOD is an *everlasting King*. Have We not too often rebelled against his Authority? Have We not, as far as in Us lay, deposed the omnipotent Sovereign, and exalted *Self* into the Throne? Made *Self*-will our Law, and *Self*-pleasing our End?

GOD is transcendently *gracious* and *amiable*. Have We not turned our Backs upon Him, by forgetting his Mercies, even while We sit at his Table, and are fed from his Hand?

... Nay,

Nay, have We not even spurned Him from our Affections, by being *Lovers of Pleasure, more than Lovers of God* *?—Awake, Conscience: bear thy impartial Testimony: and I am persuaded, the *Pharisee* in our Breasts, like the Man that was unfurnished with the Wedding-garment, must be struck dumb; must be covered with Confusion.

Is our Heart warm with *brotherly Love*?—Good-manners will put Expressions of Civility into our Mouths; but has a Power from on High implanted the royal Law of Charity in our Breasts? The Character of a Gentleman requires a Deportment accessible, obliging, and courteous: has the Spirit of *Christianity* taught Us to love, *not in Word* or plausible Appearance only, *but in Deed and in Truth* †?—Do We love our Neighbours, not merely on Account of some Relation they bear Us, or some Services they have done Us? But, because they are Creatures of the blessed GOD; are the Objects of his providential Care; and capable at least of being conformed to his Image? Do We love them, because We hope, that the *LORD JESUS CHRIST* has bought them with his Blood; is willing to make them Partakers of his SPIRIT, and Members of his Mystical Body?

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Are

* 2 Tim. iii. 4.

† 1 John iii. 18.

Are We sincerely concerned for their present Welfare, and their eternal Happiness? Do We embrace all Opportunities of promoting, both the one, and the other? Embrace them with the *same* Alacrity, and improve them with the *same* Zeal, which actuate Us in seeking *our own* Felicity?—If they exceed Us in all that is amiable, and all that is prosperous, do We contemplate their superior Excellence with a real Complacency, and their more abundant Success with a real Satisfaction?

Do We dislike to hear, and abhor to spread, defamatory Tales; even when our Adversaries are the Men, whom they tend to blacken?—When rudely affronted, or causelessly abused, do We pity the Offenders, for the *Wrong* done to their own Souls; rather than kindle into Resentment, at the *Indignity* offered to Ourselves?—When greatly injured, are We slow to Anger, and not easily provoked? Are We much more willing to be reconciled, than to foment Displeasure, and prosecute Revenge? In a Word; do We *love our Enemies*; *blest them, that curse Us*; *do Good to them, that hate Us*; *and pray for them, which despitefully use Us, and persecute Us* *?—Without this loving and lovely Dispo-

* Matt. v. 44. *What Manner of Love is this?* How disinterested! how extensive! how triumphant! Must not all the boasted *Benevolence* of the Philosopher and Moralist, strike Sail to this *evangelical* Charity? Must not both Moralist and Philosopher acknowledge the Necessity of a *divine* Operation, *thus* to enlarge, exalt, and refine their social Affections?

Disposition, *We abide*, says the Apostle, *in Death* *; are destitute of spiritual, and have no Title to eternal Life.

Let me add—Are all our Graces, and all our Works, *clothed with Humility* †? This should be the Dress, in which they appear; and the Soil, in which they flourish.—Do We maintain a very low Opinion of our own Accomplishments, and *in Honour prefer Others to Ourselves* ‡? Habitually sensible, that We are less than the least of the divine Mercies, and the chiefest of Sinners?

I might easily have branched out the preceding Subjects, into a much greater Variety of interrogatory Articles. But I choose to present You with a Specimen, rather than attempt a full Detail. Your own Meditations will enlarge the Sketch, and supply what is defective. Only let me beg of You, my dear *Theron*, to try your Heart by this Touchstone, and prove your Conduct by this Standard.—Have You lived in the *uninterrupted* Observance of all these Duties; avoiding whatever is forbidden, and obeying whatever is commanded? Have You kept, not only your outward Behaviour from any notorious Violations, but your inward Temper from all ungodly Motions, and irregular Desires?

Z 3

When

* 1 John iii. 14. † 1 Pet. v. 5. ‡ Rom. xii. 10.

When You put these Questions to Yourself, remember, That if You fail in *one* Point, or in *any* Degree, You are guilty of *all* *. If your Conformity be not *persevering* as well as *perfect*, You incur the Penalty, and are abandoned to the Curse. You stand charged, before the JUDGE of the World, with all the Guilt of all your Sins, both original and actual: and there is not one Circumstance, nor one Aggravation, of any of your Iniquities, overlooked or forgotten—UNLESS, renouncing all your *personal* Performances, You place your whole Affiance on a SAVIOUR's Atonement, and a SAVIOUR's Righteousness.—I think, You will not dare to put the Issue of your everlasting State upon the former Footing, Which is not only hazardous, but must be inevitably ruinous. You will infinitely rather choose, to acknowledge Yourself a poor Insolvent; and plead the unsearchable Riches of your REDEEMER's Obedience,

To those that believe, the Law, though *strict*, is not *terrible*. Because, be its Precepts of Holiness ever so extensive, they have been most completely fulfilled by our glorious SURETY. Be its penal Sanctions ever so rigorous, they have been satisfied to the utmost, by our great MEDIATOR.—Believers, therefore, may make their Boast of their adorable SPONSOR,
They

* Jam. xi, 10.

They may sit under his Shadow with great Delight *. While the Thunderings of Mount Sinai, and all the Terrors of the legal Dispensation, tend only to increase and quicken the refreshing Sense of their Safety. Just as the Possessor of a plentiful Estate, in some peaceful and prosperous Country, reposes Himself under the Shade of his Vine, or the Shelter of his Fig-tree; and, hearing of the Wars which embroil, or the Plagues which depopulate other Nations, tastes, with augmented Relish, his own Felicity.

Let me close with the affectionate and noble Wish of the inspired epistolary Writer. May the LORD of Peace give my dear Theron Peace always, by all Means †! And then I shall think, my Wishes are accomplishing, this Blessing is at the Door, when He sees the Purity of the divine Law—sees the Depravity of his own Nature—and the utter Impossibility of being justified, without an Interest in the great MEDIATOR's Righteousness. That Righteousness, which, as it is the only Hope, and the constant Joy, is therefore the darling Theme, of

Your ever faithful

ASPASIO.

P. S.

* Cant. ii. 3.

† 2 Thess. iii. 16.

P.S. Shall I *abridge* the preceding Letter, and contract the Whole into those two great Commandments, which made the first awakening Impressions on my own Mind? *Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy Heart: Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.*—Amazing! said your *Aspasio*. Are *these* the Commands of GOD? As obligatory, as the Prohibition of Adultery, or the Observation of the Sabbath? Then has my whole Life been a *continual Act* of Disobedience. Not a Day, no, nor an Hour, in which I have performed my Duty.—This Conviction struck me, as the Hand-writing upon the Wall struck the presumptuous Monarch.—It pursued me, as *Saul* pursued the *Christians*, not only to my own House, but even to distant Cities.—Nor ever gave up the great Controversy, till it brought me *weary* and *heavy laden* to *JESUS CHRIST*.

L E T.



L E T T E R II.

THERON to ASPASIO.

Dear ASPASIO,

MORE than three Weeks are elapsed, since You favoured me with your improving Company. During which Interval, I have frequently recollected the most material Passages of our late Discourse. I have carefully considered, both the Doctrines You advanced, and the Answers You returned to my several Objections.—I have often reviewed your valuable Letter; have used it as a *Touch-stone*, to examine my State; and have been particularly punctual in observing your parting Advice: I mean, in keeping a private Journal, not only of my outward Conduct, but of the inmost Transactions that pass in my Breast.—I have sat, every Evening, for a *Picture* of my *Mind*; and have endeavoured to take a true unflattering Draught of all its distinguishing Tempers. And, if the Diary is a faithful Mirror, if it does not aggravate the Deformity of my Features, I shall be absolutely out of Conceit with myself; shall ever entertain the *meanest* Opinion of my own, either moral or religious Qualifications.

Where

Where is that intense and supreme *Love* of GOD, which his transcendent Perfections challenge, and his ineffable Goodness claims? —Where that firm and joyful *Reliance* on *CHRIST JESUS*, in any Degree proportioned to his infinite Merits and inviolable Promises? —Where that cordial and tender Affection for my *Fellow-christians*, which is due to the Servants of a divine REDEEMER; the People whom He ransomed by his Agonies, and purchased with his very Blood? —Where is the Incense of holy Contemplation and refined Desire? Where the Flame of fervent Devotion and ever active Zeal? Such as become the *living Temple* of GOD, in which his most immaculate and glorious SPIRIT vouchsafes to reside. —These fundamental Graces, like the grand Organs in the animal System, should impart Health to the inner Man, and spread the Beauty of Holiness through all the Conversation. But these, alas! far from beating with a *vigorous* and *uniform* Pulse, hardly heave with Life; only just struggle, now and then, with some faint, intermitted, uneven Throws.

How seldom do my Actions spring from Gratitude to the everlasting BENEFactor, or aim at the Glory of his super-excellent MAJESTY? —In addressing the KING immortal, invifible, how languid are my Affections, and how wandering is my Attention? How great
my

my Unbelief, and how little my reverential Awe?—I receive innumerable Mercies; but where are my Returns of correspondent Thankfulness? I am visited with many gracious Chastisements; but without proper Resignation, or due Improvement.—Alas for my heartless Devotions, my lifeless Virtues, and the Multitude of my *refined Iniquities*!—Hid behind the Mask of outward Decency, and some customary Forms of Religion, I was altogether unacquainted with the State of my own Soul. I fancied myself *rich, and increased with Goods, and to have Need of Nothing*: even while I was *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked* *.

If I look back, and review the Years of Youth and Manhood, what has been the Tenour of my Life? More like a desolate and horrid Wilderness; than a cultivated Garden, or a fruitful Vineyard.—In *Youth*, what forbidden Gratifications of Appetite! In *Manhood*, what base Compliances with a wicked World! In *both*, what Sholes of evil Inclinations have polluted my Heart! What Swarms of vain Imaginations have debased my Thoughts! What frothy and unprofitable Words have dropt from my Lips!—By all which, how have I disobeyed, and how dishonoured GOD! How denied,
and

* Rev. iii. 17.

and how crucified *CHRIST*!—And yet supposed myself, all the while, to be *good enough*!

It is very unaccountable, that a Person of my inquisitive Disposition, should, through the Course of so many Years, be such an utter *Stranger* to Himself. I wonder at my own *preposterous* Folly!—To travel into foreign Countries, and visit the most renowned Cities in *Europe*; yet never step over the Threshold, nor look within the Apartments of my own Breast.—To carry on a Correspondence with my Friends, even in the remotest Nations; and never enter upon a Conference, nor hold any Intelligence with my own Heart!—To inquire after News from the Fleet, News from the Army, News from the Court; yet exercise neither Curiosity nor Care, with regard to the Hope of Heaven and the Concerns of Eternity!—What egregious Misconduct is this! A most pernicious Error, in the Oeconomy of religious Life.

Sometimes, I have cast a transient Glance on my *outward* Behaviour; but never extended my Search to the Delinquent, the Traitor, the Rebel *within*.—And even my outward Behaviour has been surveyed, with as much erroneous Partiality, as superficial Levity. It has been compared, not with that *exact* and *sublime* Standard, the Scriptures of Truth; but,

as

as in the Case of the self-deceiving *Pharisee*, with the unjust, extortionate, adulterous Practices of some other People. From whence I most unwarrantably concluded, That, being not quite so abandoned as the most profligate Creatures, my Character must be good, and my Condition safe.—But, Thanks to your last friendly Letter, and the excellent Expedient it recommended, I am now in a different Way of thinking.

It is strange to recollect, and indeed it is shameful to confess, the many *Artifices* which I have used, to put a *Cheat* upon myself.—Sometimes, I have fancied, that the divine Law could never be so strict, as to condemn Us inexorably, if We continue not in all its Precepts.—Sometimes, I have pleaded the Infirmary of our Nature, and endeavoured to make the Works of Darkness appear only as pitiable Failings.—Sometimes I have taken Refuge in the Excellency of our Church, and plumed myself with the borrowed Feathers of a Profession.—At other Times, I have soothed my Conscience to Rest, by a Punctuality of Attendance on Places, or a zealous Attachment to Forms. And all this, to seduce, cajole, and betray myself—betray myself, first into a vain *Conceit* of my own Endowments; then into a contemptuous *Disregard* of *CHRIST*; and at last into eternal *Destruction*.—But now I see my

my Guilt; I apprehend my Danger; and feel my helpless Condition.

Indeed, my *Aspasio*, I am now convinced, that the darkeſt Colours cannot be too dark, for the Pourtrait of my ſpiritual State. I ſee myſelf over-ſpread with an habitual Depravity, and cannot forbear crying out, with the abaſhed Leper; *Unclean! Unclean!*—The ſacred Oracles in no wiſe miſrepreſent fallen Man, when they deſcribe Him as *altogether become abominable* *. They are far from under-rating human Works, when they denominate them *filthy Rags* †.

Rags

* *Job xv. 16.*

† *Iſai. lxiv. 6.* Does not *Theron* miſapply this Text? Can it be intended to diſcredit the Qualifications of the *Upright*? Is it not rather a Brand ſet upon the Works of the *Wicked*; whoſe very “Sacrifices are an Abomination to the LORD?” Or, a Rebuke given to the ſpecious Performances of the *Hypocrite*; who is precise in the Form, but deſtitute of the Power of Godlineſs? Or, may it not refer to ritual Obſervances; in Contra-diſtinction to moral Duties, and ſpiritual Accompliſhments?

The diſparaging Character cannot, I think, be confined to ritual Obſervances; becauſe it is expreſſly ſaid, *ALL our Righteouſneſſes*, including every Kind of religious Duty.—Neither can it be appropriated to the *formal Hypocrite*, much leſs to the *notoriouſly Wicked*; becauſe, thoſe very Perſons, who are the Subject of this Aſſertion, declare in the Context; *LORD, We are thy People; Thou art our FATHER; We ſhall be ſaved.*—So that it ſeems intended to ſtain the Pride of all human Glory.

Befides; the Prophet ſpeaks of *himſelf*; *We all are as an unclean Thing.* Which, however ſtrange or unreaſonable it may ſeem, is the very ſame Charge, to which He pleads guilty in another Place; *Wo is me! I am undone! For I am a Man of unclean Lips!* Not that He was defiled with any groſs Pollutions; nay, He was a Saint of the moſt diſtinguiſhed

Rags they are, if We consider their great Imperfection; *filthy* Rags, if we advert to their manifold Defilements.—And since the Nature of GOD is so irreconcilably averse to all Contamination; since the Law of GOD requires such unspotted Perfection; O! *Who can stand before this holy LORD GOD**, in any Accomplishments of his own?

When I farther reflect, that I have only a very obscure Glimpse of the divine Purity, and am a mere Novice in the Knowledge of my own Heart; how am I amazed at the lofty Apprehensions which I once formed, concerning the *Dignity* of my Nature, and the *Integrity*

guished Lustre; but *his Eyes had seen the King, the LORD of Hosts*. He was under the clear Manifestations of a GOD, glorious in Holiness, inflexible in Justice, and infinite in all Perfections.—Amidst these Manifestations, the Impurity of his Heart and Nature, were not only *apparent*, but *glaring*; overwhelmed Him with Abashment, and, till *CHRIST* was applied in a Type, (*Isai. vii. 7.*) filled Him with Terror.

In *such* Circumstances, and under *such* Views, all our moral Virtues and evangelical Graces, all our Exercises of Devotion and Acts of Charity, will appear both *defective* and *polluted*. By no means proportioned to the Demands of the Law, nor sufficient for our Recommendation to the supreme LAWGIVER—no more than a few *tattered* Rags, can claim the Character, or perform the Services, of a complete Suit—no more than a few *filthy* Rags are fit, to dress the Bride for her Nuptials, or the Courtier for a Birth-night.

But there *is* a Righteousness—blessed be divine Grace!—spotlessly pure and consummately excellent: a Righteousness, which answers all that the CREATOR requires, and supplies all that the Creature needs: to prove this momentous Point, and to display this unspeakable Gift, is the Design of the following Sheets.

* 1 Sam. vi. 20.

grity of my Conduct ! All owing to Ignorance, the grossest Ignorance of myself and the Scriptures.—How do I shudder to think, that, in expecting Justification from the Law, I was resting the Welfare of my immortal Soul, not on the Foundation of a Rock, but on the Point of a Dagger.—I was going to the decisive Tribunal, flushed with the falsest Hopes, and charged with a Set of glittering Sins : going, like poor deluded *Uriah* *, not with any valid Credentials, but with *the Ministration of Condemnation* † in my Hand.

Though I cannot but acknowledge the Arrogance of these Pretensions, yet, loth, very loth is my Pride, to renounce the pleasing Absurdity. Self-love has searched, and searched again, for something excellent. It would fain make a better Appearance, and can hardly brook the Humiliation of imploring all *sub Formâ Pauperis*. With what Reluctance is a Sinner brought to confess Himself, sinful in every Duty, sinful in every Capacity ! Strange Perverseness !—But the Charge is undeniable. However unwilling, I must plead guilty. THOU ART WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES, AND FOUND WANTING ‡, is evidently written on all I *am*, all I *have*, all I *do*.—And if I am thus defective, even in my own Estimation ; if I am utterly condemned, at the Bar of *my own* Conscience ;

* 2 Sam. xi. 15. † 2 Cor. xi. 9. ‡ Dan. v. 27.

Let. 3. ASPASIO to THERON. 369

science; *What then shall I do, when GOD riseth up? And when HE visiteth, what shall I answer Him*?*

I now see the *Necessity* of an imputed Righteousness. Without some such Object for my Trust, I am undone. I long therefore, to hear your *Arguments* in its Behalf. And I must declare to You, if it can be satisfactorily proved from the Scriptures, it is the most comfortable Doctrine in the World, and worthy of all Acceptation.

A Letter upon this Subject, would be a singular Favour, and, I hope, an equal Blessing to

Your obliged, and affectionate,

THERON.



LETTER III.

ASPASIO to THERON.

Dear THERON,

THough all your Letters give me Pleasure, none was ever so highly pleasing, as your last. I look upon it with the same secret Joy, as a compassionate Physician observes some *very*

* *Job xxxi, 14.*

favourable Symptoms, in the Crisis of a beloved Patient's Distemper.

What You ask, I shall, without any farther Preface, attempt to execute. If my Attempt proves satisfactory to your Judgment, I am sure, it will be the most likely Means, of *healing* your Conscience, and *calming* your Fears. —When we perceive the odious Depravity of our Nature; when We discern the horrible Iniquity of our Lives; and are sensible of that tremendous Wrath and everlasting Vengeance, which are due to such guilty Creatures: *then* nothing can be found, that will speak effectual Peace, nothing that will administer solid Comfort, but only the vicarious Sufferings and the imputed Righteousness of **JESUS CHRIST**.

To this Purpose speaks one of the wisest and best of spiritual Guides; *Has Sin abounded?* As undoubtedly it has, in our Heart, and our Life: *Grace has much more abounded*, in the Obedience, and the Merits of our REDEEMER. —Nay, *has Sin reigned?* Exerted its malignant Power, in the most extensive and most destructive Manner; rendering Us subject *unto Death*, both temporal and eternal? *Even so has Grace reigned*; exerted its benign Efficacy, and in a Manner yet more triumphant; not only rescuing Us from Guilt and Ruin, but restoring Us to *everlasting Life* and Glory. And all this *through* the Righteousness, the complete
merito-

meritorious Righteousness, brought in by *JESUS CHRIST* our LORD*.

You inquire after the *Proofs* of this imputed Righteousness. From a Multitude I shall select a few. Sufficient, I hope, to make it appear—That this is the declared Doctrine of our Church, and the avowed Belief of her *most eminent* Divines—That it is copiously revealed through the whole *SCRIPTURES*; revealed in many *express* Passages, and *deducible* from a Variety of instructive Similitudes.

Hear the Language of our Common Prayer, in a very affecting and solemn Address to the *ALMIGHTY*: “We do not presume to come “to this thy Table, O merciful LORD, trusting in our own Righteousness.”—If we may not, if we dare not, rely on our own Righteousness, when we approach the *eucharistic Table*; much less may we depend upon it, when we are summoned to the *decisive Tribunal*.—Should you ask, On what we are to depend? The Exhortation to the Communion furnishes an Answer; “On the meritorious Death and Passion “of *CHRIST*, whereby *alone* we obtain Remission of Sins, and are made Partakers of “the Kingdom of Heaven.”

The Collect, appointed for the Festival of the *Circumcision*, has this remarkable Introduction;

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tion;

* *Rom. v. 21.*

tion; "Almighty GOD, whose blessed SON
 "was *obedient to the Law for Man.*" In what
 Sense, or with what Propriety, can this be
 affirmed? Unless *CHRIST's* perfect Obedience
 be referable to Us, and accepted in our Stead?
 On any other Interpretation, I should think,
 He was obedient, not for *Man*, but for *Him-
 self*.

Should the artful Critic give some other
 Turn to these Passages, it will avail Him but
 little. Because the Church, her own *best* Ex-
 positor, has explained the Meaning of such
 Phrases, and put the Matter beyond all Doubt.
 In her eleventh Article she says; "We are ac-
 "counted righteous before GOD only for the
 "Merits of our LORD and SAVIOUR *JE-
 "SUS CHRIST.*"—The Doctrine relating to
 Pardon of Sin, had been stated in a preceding
 Article. This displays the Method, whereby
 Sinners may appear righteous in the Eye of
 GOD, and in the Court of Heaven; so as to
 recover the divine Favour, and obtain a Title
 to eternal Bliss.—This is done, not by any
native Righteousness, not by any *acquired* Right-
 eousness, but by an *imputed* Righteousness.
 Had we been justified by either of the former
 Methods, it would not have been said, We
 are *accounted*, but we *are* righteous. They are
 so far from constituting our reconciling and
 justifying Righteousness, that they have no
 Share

Share in it; contribute nothing towards it; are totally excluded from it. We are accounted righteous, and accepted as such, ONLY through the meritorious Obedience, and propitiating Blood of our great MEDIATOR.

The Homilies are, if it be possible, still more explicit, and more cogent. In the Homily concerning the Salvation of Mankind, we read the following Words;—"The Apostle toucheth
 " three Things, which must go together in our
 " Justification. On GOD's Part, his great
 " Mercy and Grace. On CHRIST's Part, the
 " Satisfaction of GOD's Justice, or the Price
 " of our Redemption, by the Offering of his
 " Body, and Shedding of his Blood, with
 " Fulfilling of the Law perfectly. On our
 " Part, true and lively Faith in the Merits of
 " JESUS CHRIST, which yet is not ours,
 " but by GOD's working in Us."—You see, according to the Judgment of our venerable Reformers, not only the Offering of CHRIST's Body, and Shedding of CHRIST's Blood, but also his *perfect Fulfilling* of the Law, are the adequate Price of our Redemption. All these act conjointly, they sweetly harmonize, in the great and glorious Work. To suppose their Disunion, is a *doctrinal* Mistake, somewhat like that *practical* Error of the Papists, in severing the sacramental Wine from the sacramental Bread; administering to the Laity the

Symbols of the slaughtered Body, but withholding the Symbols of the streaming Blood.

There are *other* Clauses in the same Homily, which set the Seal of the Church to our Sentiments. I shall content myself with transcribing one from the Conclusion.—“*CHRIST*, “ says that Form of sound Words, is the Righteousness of all them, that do truly believe. “ He for them paid their Ransom by his Death. “ He for them fulfilled the Law in his Life. “ So that now, in *HIM*, and by *HIM*, every “ true *christian* Man may be called a Fulfiller “ of the Law; forasmuch as that which their “ Infirmary lacked, *CHRIST*’s Righteousness “ hath supplied.”—This Authority is as clear, as the Doctrine authorized is comfortable. May the former sway our Judgment! May the latter cheer our Hearts!

The Homily on *CHRIST*’s Nativity informs the Reader, that the Design of our *L O R D*’s Incarnation was—“ To give Light unto the “ World, and call Sinners to Repentance; to “ fulfil the Law for Us, and become the Propitiation for our Sins; to cast out the Prince “ of this World, and destroy the Works of “ the Devil.”—We have all broke the Law; We are all unable to keep the Law; therefore, the blessed *JESUS* fulfilled the Law—fulfilled it in *each* and *every* of its Demands—fulfilled it, in the *highest* Degree of Perfection—and, what

what is of all Considerations most delightful, fulfilled it *for Us*, and in our Stead. That the Merit of his Obedience might redound to Us; might be placed to our Account; and justify Us in the Sight of GOD.

Upon the whole—If there be any Worthiness in our LORD's most holy Nature; any Merit in his Exercise of the sublimest Virtues; completed by his Submission to the most ignominious Sufferings, and tormenting Death; then, according to this *Standard-System* of orthodox Divinity, these are the *Ground* of a Sinner's Justification.—And, according to the Dictates of the most *unbiassed* Reason, they are the *best*, the *surest* Ground, that can either be wished or imagined.

Does it not, from the preceding Quotations, appear; That the Doctrine of Justification through the imputed Righteousness of our blessed REDEEMER, is far from being disclaimed by the *established Church*?—I am sorry, but constrained to own, that We rarely find any considerable Strictures of this great evangelical Peculiarity, in our *modern* theological Discourses. Yet there have been Preachers of the highest Repute for Learning, for Judgment, and for Piety, who professedly maintained this grand Truth of the Gospel.

The devout Bishop *Beveridge*, in his *Private Thoughts*, has left upon Record the following very remarkable Acknowledgment. Which, if it suited *his* State of eminent Holiness, cannot be too humbling, my dear *Theron*, for your Lips and for mine. “I do not remember, “neither do I believe, that I ever prayed, in “all my Life-time, with that Reverence, or “heard with that Attention, or received the “Sacrament with that Faith, or did any Work “with that pure Heart, and single Eye, as I “ought to have done. Infomuch, that I look “upon all my Righteousness, but as filthy “Rags; and it is in the Robes only of the “Righteousness of the SON of GOD, that “I dare appear before the MAJESTY of “Heaven.”

The fervent and affectionate Bishop *Hopkins** speaks in perfect Consonance with his Brother of *St. Asaph*.—“The Law was given Us, not “that We should seek Justification by the Observance of it, but finding it impossible to “be justified by fulfilling it, We should thereby “be driven to *CHRIST*’s Righteousness; who “hath both fulfilled it in Himself, and satisfied for our transgressing of it; and therefore saith the Apostle, *The Law was a School-master, to bring Us unto CHRIST; that We “might be justified by Faith.* To this End it “was

* See his Sermon on *John* vii. 19.

“ was promulged, that seeing the Strictness of
 “ its Precepts, the Rigour of its Threatenings,
 “ and withal being convinced of our Impo-
 “ tence to fulfil its Commands, We might be
 “ urged by its Terrors to fly to *CHRIST*, and
 “ find that Righteousness in Him which may
 “ answer all the Demands of the Law.”

Bishop *Reynolds* *, styled by his Contemporaries, and not without Reason, *A walking Library*, bears his Testimony in the following Words;—“ *CHRIST* as our Surety paid our
 “ Debt, underwent the Curse due to our Sins,
 “ and bare them all in his own Body on the
 “ Tree; became subject to the Law for Us,
 “ and representatively in our Stead fulfilled all
 “ the Righteousness the Law required, active
 “ and passive. For Sin being once committed;
 “ there must be a double Act to Justification;
 “ the Suffering of the Curse, and the Fulfill-
 “ ing of Righteousness anew. The one, a Sa-
 “ tisfaction for the Injury We have done to
 “ GOD, as our JUDGE: the other, the Per-
 “ formance of a Service which We owe unto
 “ Him, as our MAKER.”

To this illustrious Triumvirate, let me join
 Bishop *Davenant*. Who, for his great Abili-
 ties,

* See his Treatise intitled *The Life of CHRIST*.—Which, as well as all his other Works, abound with striking Sentiments; have much Elegance of Diction, a copious Variety of Learning, and a lively animating Spirit of evangelical Piety.

ties, and unquestionable Integrity, was appointed one of our religious Plenipotentiaries, at the renowned Synod of *Dort*. In his very valuable Exposition of the Epistle to the *Colossians*, He writes to this Effect: "*Ye are complete in CHRIST*. Ye are furnished, in that
 "all-sufficient REDEEMER, with whatever
 "is requisite to everlasting Salvation. With
 "Wisdom; since it is the Consummation of this
 "noble Endowment, to know *CHRIST* and
 "Him crucified. With *Righteousness*; because
 "He has perfectly satisfied the Law *, and
 "thoroughly expiated our Guilt. With *Sanctification*; because his Spirit dwelling in our
 "Hearts, mortifies our corrupt Affections,
 "and renews the Soul after the Image of its
 "CREATOR."

Let me bring up the *Rear* with a Testimony, which, for Clearness, Solidity, and a full Representation,

* In this Respect principally (says our Author; enlarging upon the Text) are Believers *complete*; because, though destitute of any Righteousness, that may properly be called *their own*, *CHRIST* has graciously enriched them with his. *Vid. Davenant. in Epist. ad Coloss.*

Let me beg Leave to intimate, That this Exposition of the Epistle to the *Colossians*—for Perspicuity of Style, and Accuracy of Method—for Judgment in discerning, and Fidelity in representing, the Apostle's Meaning—for Strength of Argument in refuting Errors, and Felicity of Invention in deducing practical Doctrines, tending both to the Establishment of Faith, and the Cultivation of Holiness—is, I think, inferior to no Writing of the Kind; and richly deserves to be read, to be studied, to be imitated, by our young Divines,

presentation of the evangelical Doctrine, might very justly have claimed a Place in the *Van*. It is taken from an Author, whom the general Consent of our Nation has distinguished with the Title of *Judicious*. The judicious *Hooker*, in a Treatise on Justification, says; —“ It is a childish Cavil our Adversaries do “ so greatly please themselves with, exclaiming, “ that We tread all *Christian* Virtues under our “ Feet; because We teach, That Faith alone “ justifieth. Whereas, by this Speech, We ne- “ ver meant to exclude either Hope or Charity “ from being always joined as inseparable “ Mates with Faith, in the Man that is jus- “ tified; or Works from being added, as ne- “ cessary Duties, required of every justified “ Man: but to shew, that Faith is the only “ Hand, which putteth on *CHRIST* to Justi- “ fication; and *CHRIST* the only Garment, “ which being so put on, covereth the Shame “ of our defiled Natures, hideth the Imper- “ fection of our Works, and preserveth Us “ blameless in the Sight of GOD: before whom, “ otherwise, the Weakness of our Faith were “ Cause sufficient to make Us culpable, yea, to “ flout Us out of the Kingdom of Heaven, where “ nothing that is not absolute can enter.”

You will allow the sagacious Bishop *Sander- son* * to sum up the Evidence; or rather to make

* See his Sermon upon *Isaiah* lii. 3.

make an important Remark on the Whole of the Controversy. That great Light of the Church, both in casuistical and practical Divinity, observes;—"The Tidings of a REDEEMER must be blessed and welcome News, to those that are sensible of their own Poverty, and take it of Grace." Our eagle-eyed Divine penetrates into the *true*, though *latent*, Cause of the prevailing Averseness to this evangelical Doctrine. It is founded on the *State* of the *Heart*, more than upon any Force of Argument. People are but little, if at all, sensible of their spiritual and moral Indigence; of the Defects that depreciate, and the Defilements that sully, whatever they have, and whatever they do. Nay, strongly tinctured with Pride, they would be themselves the *Alpha*, and suffer the blessed JESUS to be no more than the *Omega*, in procuring their eternal Salvation. Therefore, they can hardly be reconciled to the humbling Thought of receiving all, as a Gift of freest Grace.

Whereas, was this grand Obstacle once removed; were Men *convinced* of *Sin*, of exceeding Sinfulness in their worst Estate, and of remaining Sinfulness in their best; they would soon be *convinced* of *Righteousness*, of the absolute Necessity and inestimable Worth of a REDEEMER's Righteousness. They would no longer dispute against it, but cordially embrace

brace it; intirely rely on it; and adore the Goodness, the transcendent and unutterable Goodness of GOD, in providing it.

I think, in one of our Conferences, I undertook to produce my Vouchers from the ancient *Fathers*. Let me now subjoin two or three Attestations of this Kind.—From *one* of which You will perceive, that those early Writers had a considerable Degree of Clearness upon the Point. From the *other* You will see, that, far from rejecting the Doctrine, they embrace it with Delight and Rapture. And if You will admit of the *last*, You cannot be startled at any Thing, that I shall advance upon the Subject.—Let me only premise in general, that, if those Authors are not so copious and explicit, with regard to the Imputation of *active* Righteousness; they abound in Passages, which evince the *Substitution* of *CHRIST* in our Stead. Passages, which disclaim all Dependence on any Duties of our own, and fix the Hopes of a Believer wholly upon the Merits of his SAVIOUR. When this is the Case, I am very little solicitous about any particular Forms of Expression; and not at all angry, even though the Words, which I think most significant, are not retained.

Clemens—an intimate Acquaintance of St. Paul's, and whose Name was in the Book of
Life

*Life**—in his truly excellent Epistle to the *Corinthians*, assures that People †: *We are not, in any Respect or in any Degree, justified by Ourselves, but wholly by JESUS CHRIST: not by our own Wisdom or Prudence, which could never find out the Way; not by the Piety of our Hearts, or Works of Righteousness performed in our Lives, which could never be sufficient for the Purpose; but by Faith. The one invariable Method, by which the Almighty SOVEREIGN has justified all his People, ever since the World began.*

Justin—who was first a *Gentile Philosopher*, then an eminent *Christian*, and at last a *Martyr* for the Truth—speaks more fully to the Point ‡: *What else could cover our Sins, but the Righteousness*

* *Phil. iv. 3.*

† Οὐ οἱ αὐτῶν δικαιοσύνη, οὐδὲ διὰ τῆς μετῆρας σοφίας, ἢ συνέσεως, ἢ εὐσεβείας, ἢ ἔργων ὡς κατεργασαμένα ἐν ὀσιότητι καρδίας· ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς πίστεως, δι' ἧς πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ὁ παντοκράτωρ Θεὸς ἐδικαίωσεν. † *Epist. ad Corinth.*—This Quotation is explained, as well as translated. But that every Reader may distinguish the Text from the Paraphrase, the first is printed in *Italic*, the last in *Roman Characters*.

‡ Τί ἄλλο τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν ἡδυνήθη καλύψαι, ἢ ἐκεῖνη δικαιοσύνη; Ἐν τίνι δικαιώθηται δυνατὸς τοῦ ἀνομίου ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀσεβείας, ἢ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ; Ω Τῆ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΑΣ ΚΑΤΑΛΛΑΓΗΣ, ὡ τῆς ἀνέξιχνιας δημιουργίας, ὡ τῶν ἀπροσδοκῆτων συνεργειῶν, ἵνα ἀνομία πολλῶν ἐν δικαίῳ ἐνὶ κρυβῇ, δικαιοσύνη δὲ ἐνός πολλὰς ἀνομίας δικαιοσῇ. *Epist. ad Diogn.*—Though *Du Pin* questions the Authority of this Epistle, He allows it to have been written by an ancient Hand. *Dr. Cave*, as capable a Judge, thinks there is no Reason to doubt, but it is the genuine Work of *Justin*.

ness of **JESUS CHRIST**? By what possible Means could We, unrighteous and unholy Creatures, be justified, but only by the Interposition of the **SON of GOD** in our Behalf?—Having, in this Clause, made a Profession of his Faith; the good Man, on the Contemplation of such a Privilege, breaks out into a kind of holy Transport. *O sweet and delightful Exchange! A Dispensation unsearchably wise and gracious! Benefits, quite unexpected, and rich beyond all our Hopes! That the Sin of Many should be bid by one righteous Person; and that the Righteousness of One, should justify many Transgressors.*

The following Words are remarkably strong, and the Sentiments peculiarly bold. But they come from the Pen of the finest Writer in Ecclesiastical Antiquity. They have the great Name, and venerable Character of St. Chrysostom, for their recommendatory Preface*.—*Fear not, says He, on Account of any of thy past Transgressions of the Law, when once Thou hast fled by Faith to **JESUS CHRIST**. The most enormous and the most destructive Violation of the Law, is, To be with-held, by the Consciousness of any Guilt whatever, from believing on **CHRIST**.*

When

* Μη τοιμυ φοβηθης, ως του νομου παραβαινων, επειδαν τη πιστει προσελθης· τοτε γαρ αυτην παραβαινεις, οτε δι' αυτον τω Χριστω μη πιστευσης· ως αν πιστευσης αυτω, κακεινου επληρωσας και πολλω πλεον η εκεινους· πολλω γαρ μειζονα δικαιοσυνην λαβεις. Homil. XVII. in X ad Rom.

When Thou adest Faith on Him, Thou hast fulfilled, I might say, more than fulfilled the Law. For Thou hast a better Righteousness, than it could ever require; a better Obedience, than any Creature could possibly pay.

Two or three Witnesses of distinguished Ability, and undoubted Veracity, are a sufficient Confirmation of any Cause. For this Reason, and to avoid a tiresome Prolixity, I have set aside a Multitude of Voices; which, from the Writings of our own and foreign Divines, are ready to pour their united Evidence.—And lest the Business of Quotation, though sparingly managed, should seem dry and tedious; I will relieve your Weariness, and inviven the Collection, by an Extract from the Prince of *English* Poetry.—*Michael*, the prophetic Arch-angel, mentioning the destructive Consequences of the Fall, and asserting the GODHEAD of that glorious PERSON, who undertook to be the Repairer of this deadly Breach; adds,

*Which HE, who comes thy SAVIOUR, shall re-
cure,*

*Not by destroying Satan, but his Works,
In Thee and in Thy Seed. Nor can this be,
But by fulfilling (that which Thou didst want)
Obedience to the Law of GOD, impos'd
On Penalty of Death; and suffering Death,*

The

*The Penalty to thy Transgression due ;
And due to theirs, which out of thine will grow.
So ONLY can high Justice rest appaid*.*

Here then is the exprefs Determination of our *Homilies*—supported by the Authority of our *Articles*—established by the Concurrence of our *Liturgy*—still farther ratified by the unanimous Attestation of several celebrated *Divines* ; whose Lives were the brightest Ornament to our Church, and whose Writings are the most unexceptionable Interpretation of her Meaning.—As a *Capital*, to crown and complete this grand *Column*, supervenes the Declaration of the antient *Fathers* ; those who flourished, and with the highest Renown, in the first and purest Ages of Christianity.—So that, if great Authorities carry any Weight ; if illustrious Names challenge any Regard ; this Tenet comes attended and dignified with very considerable *Credentials*.

Yet I will venture to affirm, that all these, considerable as they appear, are the *least* of those Testimonials, which recommend the Doctrine to my *Theron's* Acceptance, and which have gained it Admittance into the Heart of

His most affectionate

ASPASIO.

* *Milton*, B. XII. 393.



L E T T E R IV.

ASPASIO to THERON.

Dear THERON,

THE Family, in which I have the Satisfaction to reside, though remarkable for their genteel Figure and ample Fortune, are still more amiably distinguished by their *Benevolence, Hospitality, and Charity*.—As they live at a Distance from the Market-town, the Lady has converted one Apartment of her House into a little Dispensatory; and stocked it with some of the most common, the most needed, and most salutary Medicines. Which, in Cases of *ordinary* Indisposition, She distributes to her indigent Neighbours, with singular Compassion, and with no small Success.—This fine Morning, *Emilia* has ordered some skilful Hands into the Fields, to cull their healing Simples, and lay up a Magazine of Health for the afflicted Poor. *Camillus* is withdrawn, to receive his Rents, and settle Accounts with his Tenants.

Suppose, We act in Concert with these valuable Persons. Suppose, We range the delightful Fields of Scripture, and form a Collection, not of salutiferous Herbs, but of inestimable

estimable Texts; such as may be of sovereign Efficacy, to *assuage* the *Anguish* of a guilty Conscience, and impart *saving Health* to the dis-tempered Soul.—Suppose, We open the Mines of divine Inspiration, and enrich Ourselves, not with the Gold of *Ophir*, but with the *unsearchable Treasures* of *CHRIST*; or with that perfect Righteousness of our REDEEMER, which is incomparably more precious, than the Revenues of a County, or the Produce of *Peru*.

In pleading for imputed Righteousness, We have already urged the Authority of our established Church, and the Suffrage of her most eminent Divines.—The Opinion of excellent Writers, which has been the Result of much Learning, great Attention, and earnest Prayer, is no contemptible Evidence. Yet We must always reserve the *casting Voice*, for those infallible Umpires, the Prophets and Apostles. *If we receive, with a deferential Regard, the Witness of Men; the Witness of GOD is greater**, and challenges the most implicit Submission.—Which Remark naturally leads me to the intended Subject of this Epistle; or rather calls upon me to fulfil my late Engagement, and shew—That the above-mentioned Doctrine is copiously revealed, through the Scriptures of the *Old and New Testament*.

B b 2

Be

* 1 John v. 9.

Be pleased to consider that memorable Portion from the Epistle to the *Romans*; which, though little inferior to a decisive Proof, is produced only as an Introduction to others. *Now the Righteousness of GOD without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even the Righteousness of GOD, which is by Faith of JESUS CHRIST unto all and upon all them that believe* *. The Righteousness of GOD, signifies that Righteousness, which the incarnate GOD wrought out in his own all-glorious Person †. It is styled the Righteousness of GOD, by way of superlative Pre-eminence; in Opposition to any Righteousness of our own, and in Contradistinction to the Righteousness of all Creatures whatever.—This Righteousness is *without the Law*. Its Efficacy has no Dependence on, its Merit receives no Addition from,

* *Rom. iii. 21, 22.*

† This Explication, or something to the same Purpose, has occurred already. But it is hoped, the candid Reader will not condemn the Repetition, as a *disagreeable* and *jejune* Tautology.—Because, it is so consonant to the Practice of our great Apostle, who repeats the Term, re-inculcates the Doctrine, and hardly knows how to desist from the favourite Topic: like One, who was quite enamoured with the Subject; who found Music in the Words; and whose Happiness was bound up in the Blessing.—Because, it is conformable to another, and a greater Example. The LORD JEHOVAH Himself, within the Compass of *one* Chapter, once and again, yea, a third and a fourth Time, styles this wonderful Obedience, MY RIGHTEOUSNESS. As though the GOD of infinite Perfection, gloried in it; thought Himself most *eminently* magnified by it; and was jealous to have all the Honour resulting from it. See *Isai. li.*

from, any Conformity of our Practice to the divine Law: being complete, absolutely complete in itself, and altogether sufficient to procure the Reconciliation and Acceptance of Sinners.—This Righteousness is *witnessed by the Law and the Prophets*; receives an uniform Attestation from the several Writings of the Old Testament. To investigate which Attestation, to examine its Pertinency, and consider its Sufficiency, is our present pleasing Business.

We may begin with that gracious Declaration, made to the first Transgressors: *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head**; shall destroy the Works of the Devil, and retrieve whatever was lost by his malicious Artifices†. How could this be effected, but by restoring that Righteousness, which, for a while, our first Parents possessed; which they ought always to have held fast; but from which they so soon and so unhappily swerved?—Take the Position in the right Sense, and *Christianity is, if not intirely, yet very nearly as old as the Creation*. It was comprehended in this blessed Promise, as the *Stamina* of the largest

Plants

* Gen. iii. 15.

† In some such Sense, I think, the Promise must have been understood by our first Parents. Otherwise, it could have yielded them no *effectual* Relief, under the distressing Sense of their own Misery, and the dismal Apprehension of their Posterity's Ruin.

Plants are contained in the Substance of their respective Seeds. Every subsequent Revelation being no more, than a *gradual Evolution* of this grand evangelical Principle; acting like the vegetative Powers of Nature, which, in rearing an Oak with all its Spread of Branches, only expand the Tunicles, and fill up the Vessels of the Acorn.

This Doctrine seems to have been typically taught, by the remarkable Manner of *clothing* our first Parents.—All they could do for their own Recovery, was like the patched and beggarly Mantle of *Fig-leaves*. This they relinquish, and GOD himself furnishes them with Apparel *. Animals are slain, not for Food but *Sacrifice*; and the naked Criminals are arrayed with the Skins of those slaughtered Beasts. The Victims figured the *Expiation* of *CHRIST*'s Death; the Clothing typified the *Imputation* of his Righteousness.—In perfect Conformity, perhaps with a Reference, to the Passage thus interpreted, the Apostle just now expressed Himself; *even the Righteousness of GOD, which is not only made over † to all Believers, as a rich Portion; but put † upon all, as a beautiful Garment.* Whereby alone their moral Deformity can be covered, and their everlasting Con-

* Gen. iii. 20.

†† Rom. iii. 22. ΕΙΣ παντας, ΕΠΙ παντας τας υψιφύλακας.

Confusion prevented.—*Milton*, it is certain, speaking of this memorable Transaction, considers it in the same spiritual Sense :

Nor HE their outward only with the Skins Of Beasts, but inward Nakedness (much more Opprobrious!) with his Robe of Righteousness Arraying, covered from his Father's Sight.

In thy Seed, says the great JEHOVAH to his Servant *Abraham*, *shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed* *. That the Seed here mentioned is *CHRIST*, the Apostle † places beyond all Doubt. Both Scripture and Reason declare, That *true Blessedness* must necessarily include—the Pardon of Sins, and the Favour of GOD—the Sanctification of our Souls, and the Inheritance of Life eternal. None of which are to be acquired by any human Performances; but all are to be sought, and all may be found, in the Root and Offspring of *Abraham*, *JESUS CHRIST*. Who is therefore most pertinently styled, THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS ‡: The *actual* Desire of every enlightened Nation; and the *implicit* Desire of all Nations whatever. Because

* *Gen. xxii. 18.*

† See *St. Paul's* Comment upon this invaluable Promise, *Gal. iii. 8, &c.* This Commentator, We all allow, was guided by the SPIRIT, and knew the Mind of GOD. According to his Exposition of the Text, it is pregnant with the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, and contains an Abridgment of the Gospel.

‡ *Hag. ii. 7.*

B b 4

Because all, without any Exception, covet, what is to be derived only from *JESUS CHRIST* the Righteous, *real* Happiness.

The patriarchal Age, and the legal Oeconomy, bore their Testimony to this Truth, by typical Persons, emblematical Miracles, and figurative Usages. Indeed, the whole ceremonial Service was a grand *Series* of Types, representing *CHRIST* and his everlasting Righteousness. In all which, this was the *unanimous* though silent Language; *Behold the LAMB of GOD, that taketh away the Sin of the World.*—These I shall not stay to discuss, because Proofs of a more explicit and positive Nature wait for our Consideration. Only I would just make a transient Observation, relating to one very remarkable Constitution in the *Jewish* Ritual.

The High-Priest had, on the Front of his Mitre, a Plate of pure Gold, engraven with that venerable Motto *, *HOLINESS TO THE LORD*. Which was always to be on his Forehead, when He performed the solemn Ministrations of the Sanctuary; and for this important Reason, that the People *might be accepted before the LORD* †. Did not this most clearly foreshew the immaculate Holiness of our great *HIGH-PRIEST*? And with equal Clearness imply, that *his* Holiness should procure Acceptance for all his Followers?

In

* *Exod.* xxviii. 36, 37.

† *Exod.* xxviii. 38.

In the Book of *Job*, We have several Hints of this Truth, and one Passage very express to our Purpose.—*Elihu* describes an unconverted Person, under the chastising Hand of Providence. *Whose Life*, through the Extremity of his Disease, *drew near to the Grave*; and *his Soul*, through the Multitude of his Iniquities, was ready to become a Prey to the Destroyers, the tremendous Executioners of Vengeance. In this deplorable Condition, *if there be present with Him, the MESSENGER* * of the Covenant of Peace; *that great INTERPRETER* * of the divine Counsels, who, for his super-excellent Wisdom, is justly deemed *One among a thousand*, or rather the chiefest among ten thousand. If He, by his enlightening SPIRIT, vouchsafe to shew unto the afflicted Man his own perfect Righteousness; that most meritorious Uprightness, on which alone a Sinner may depend, both for temporal and eternal Salvation. Then the poor distressed Creature,

* * See *Job xxxiii. 22*, &c.—CHRIST is called *The Angel of the divine Presence*, *Isai. lxiii. 9*. *The Messenger of the Covenant*. *Mal. iii. 1*.—He is also, in the most unlimited Sense of the Phrase, *The Interpreter of the divine Counsels*: He, to whom the FATHER hath given the Tongue of the Learned, and by whom He makes known the otherwise unsearchable Mysteries of the Gospel.—Should any Doubt remain, concerning the Propriety of applying this Passage to our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Reader, I hope, will give himself the Pleasure of perusing the polite *Wisfius*, *Oecon. Lib. IV. Cap. iii. § xxxi.* and Dr. *Grey's* valuable Notes upon the Place, in his *Liber Jobi*,

ture, attentive to this Instruction, and applying this Righteousness, is made Partaker of Pardon: GOD, the sovereign LORD of Life and Death, *is gracious unto Him*; and saith, in the Greatness of his Strength, as well as in the Multitude of his Mercies, *Deliver Him from going down into the Pit of Corruption*, as a Pledge of his Deliverance from the Pit of Perdition. For, *I have found a Ransom*, sufficient to satisfy my Justice. I have received an Atonement, in behalf of this once obnoxious, now reconciled Transgressor.

But why do I select *one* particular Paragraph? It seems to be the main Design of the *whole* Book, to overthrow all Pretensions of any justifying Righteousness in Man. That the *wretched Sinner*, nay, that the *greatest Saint*, stript of every personal Plea, may rely only on the Merits of a REDEEMER. This is the final Issue of all those warm Debates, which pass between the afflicted Hero and his Friends. This is the grand Result of *Elibu's* calm Reasoning, and of GOD Almighty's awful Interrogatories. The apparent *Center* this *, in which all the Lines terminate; justly therefore to be considered, as the *principal* Scope of the whole Work.

I must not omit an excellent Observation, which I find in some *critical and explanatory* Notes,

* See *Jeb* xlii. 6.

Notes *, on the last Words of *David*. The judicious Author proving, that this Song relates to *CHRIST*; that it displays the Dignity of our REDEEMER, under the Character of *The KING*, and *The JUST ONE*; adds, as an Explication of the last amiable and glorious Title—"Our *LORD JESUS CHRIST* is so called, not so much for having fulfilled all Righteousness in his own Person, and performed an unfinning Obedience to the Will of *GOD*, as because by his Righteousness imputed to Us, We also upon the Terms † of the Gospel, are justified, or accounted righteous before *GOD*."

I think We may evidently discern the same Vein of evangelical Doctrine, running through many of the *Psalms*.—*He shall receive ‡*, says our royal Author, *the Blessing of plenary Remission from the LORD, and Righteousness also from the GOD of his Salvation*: even that perfect Righteousness, which is not performed by Man,

* By Dr. Grey.

† That is, *freely*; or, as the Prophet speaks, *without Money and without Price*. For nothing is requisite, in order to a Participation of *CHRIST* and his Benefits, but a Conviction of our extreme Need, and an humble Desire to receive them; receive them as Gifts of pure Grace, to the most undeserving Creatures.—This Point, which is so intimately connected with our Comfort and Hope, the Reader may see more fully stated in *Dialogue XV*.

‡ The Words of the *Psalmist* are parallel to the Language of the Apostle; *קָדַשׁ לְקַחְתָּ* ο λαμβανων την δωρεαν της δικαιοσυνης. *Psal. xxiv. 5. Rom. v. 17.*

Man, but *bestowed* by JEHOVAH; and which is the only solid Basis, to support our Hopes of Pardon and Happiness.—Here the Promise is made. Elsewhere the *Psalmist* expresses his supreme Value for it, and intire Dependence on it. *I will go forth in the Strength of the LORD GOD, and will make Mention of thy Righteousness only* *. As though He had said; I will have Recourse to no other Righteousness, for the Consolation of my Soul. I will plead no other Righteousness, for the Recommendation of my Prayers. I will fly to no other Righteousness, for my final Acceptance, and endless Felicity.—This is that *Raiment of Needle-work and Clothing of wrought Gold* †, in which the King's Daughter is introduced to the adorable JEHOVAH. This is that Garment for Glory and for Beauty, which clothed our great HIGH-PRIEST, and descending to his very Feet, clothes and adorns the lowest Members of his mystical Body ‡.

Justly therefore, and on the most rational Principles, does the *Psalmist* declare; *Blessed is the People, that know the joyful Sound: they shall walk,*

* *Psal. lxi. 16.* There is, in the *Hebrew Original*, and in the new Translation, a very emphatical Repetition; which adds Weight to the Sentiment, and demands a very peculiar Attention from the Reader: *Thy Righteousness, even thine only.*

† *Psal. lxxv. 13.* These beautiful Images are used, to denote the rich and costly Nature, the distinguished and matchless Excellency, of our MEDIATOR's Righteousness.

‡ *Rev. i. 13.*

*walk, O LORD, in the Light of thy Countenance. In thy Name shall they rejoice all the Day: and in thy Righteousness shall they be exalted**.—They are truly blessed, they alone are happy, who know the joyful Sound of the Gospel; not only receive it with their Ears, but admit it into their very Hearts: so as to partake of the sacred Peace, and spiritual Liberty, which it proclaims.—*They shall walk in the Light of thy Countenance*; they shall enjoy such Communications of thy Grace, and such Manifestations of thy Love, as will constitute the Serenity and Sunshine of their Souls.—*In thy Name, O LORD JESUS CHRIST, shall they rejoice*; in thy glorious Person, and thy infinite Merits. And not occasionally, but habitually; not barely at some distinguished Intervals, but *all the Day*. Their Joy shall be as lasting, as it is substantial.—*And in thy Righteousness shall they be exalted*; set above the tantalizing Power of the World; placed beyond the slavish Fear of Death; and raised, at the last, to a State of endless Glory, and consummate Bliss.

How thoroughly *evangelical* is this sweet and seraphic Writer! He has Joy, He has Blessedness, and He looks for everlasting Exaltation. Yet not from his Faith, his Repentance, and his own sincere Obedience. According to this, which is the modern Scheme, Faith, instead
of

* *Psal.* lxxxix. 15, 16.

of receiving, would *supplant* the LORD JESUS: Repentance, instead of being the Gift of CHRIST, would become his *Rival*: and sincere Obedience, which is for the Praise and Glory of GOD, would *eclipse* and *impoverish* his Grace.—But *David* adopts no such Sentiments. *David* maintains no such Doctrine. This is the invariable Language of his Heart, *All my Springs* of Hope, of Trust, and Consolation, O thou adored IMMANUEL, *are in Thee* *.

This Sense is the less precarious, I had almost said the more certain, as it exactly corresponds with the Analogy of Faith, and coincides with the express Declarations of other Scriptures.—*Isaiab* is styled the *Evangelist* of the *Jewish* Church. Because, more frequently than any of the Prophets He celebrates, and more copiously explains, this and other Peculiarities of the Gospel.—In the very first Chapter, He preaches these glad Tidings; *Sion shall be redeemed with Judgment, and her Converts with Righteousness*. *Sion*, the Gospel-Church, composed of fallen Creatures, sometime disobedient to their GOD, and enslaved to Satan, shall be *redeemed*. Redeemed, not with corruptible Things, Silver and Gold, but by severe *Judgments* executed on their glorious Head, and gracious Representative. And not by these only,

* *Psal.* lxxxvii. 7.

only, but by *Righteousness* also; by the perfect and most meritorious *Righteousness* of the same divinely excellent Person *.

Our sacred Author bears his Testimony, with warmer Zeal and brighter Evidence, as he proceeds in his incomparable Discourses. *Surely, shall one say* (or, as it may be rendered, *only*) *in the LORD have I Righteousness and Strength †*: Please to observe, *Theron*. It is not said, in my own Works, in my own Repentance, no, nor in my own Faith, but *in the LORD JESUS* have I *Righteousness*.—*Righteousness* for Justification, and *Strength* for Sanctification: An imputed *Righteousness*, to procure my Acceptance; an imparted *Strength*, to produce my Holiness. The first, constituting my Title to the everlasting Inheritance; the last, forming my personal Preparation for its Enjoyment.—*Surely*, which expresses a firm Persuasion, and an unshaken Affiance. *Only*, which denotes an utter Renunciation of all other Confidence, and excludes every other Ground of Hope.—*Righteousnesses ‡*, the Original is in the plural Number. Which seems to be used, not without

* *Hanc Redemptionem docet SPIRITUS SANCTUS habere Nos in Obedientiâ & Sanguine JESU CHRISTI. Isai. i. 27. Vitringa in Loc.*

† *Isai. xlv. 24.*

‡ צדקות parallel to which, both in Construction and Signification, is the Phrase used by St. John, *δικαιοσυλάς*, Rev. xix. 8. *The fine Linen is the Righteousness* (properly, the *Righteousnesses*) *of the Saints*.

without an important Design; to enlarge the Significancy of the Word, and make it correspond with the Richness of the Blessing. So that it may imply the Fulness and super-eminent Excellency of this Gift of Grace; as comprehending whatever *, either of Suffering or of Obedience, is requisite to the Justification of Sinners.—Insomuch that in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, all the Seed of Israel shall not be justified only, but rejoice; and not only confide, but glory †.

What he had just now asserted, he exemplifies in his own, and in the Person of every true Believer. *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my Soul shall be joyful in my GOD; for He hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation, He hath covered me with the Robe of Righteousness ‡.*

—True Believers are compared, in one of our sacred Eclogues, to a Company of Horses in Pharaoh's Chariot ||: to Horses, than which no Animal is more stately and graceful: to Egyptian Horses, which were the best and completest, then in the World: to those in Pharaoh's Chariot, which, doubtless, were a choice Set; selected from Thousands; and finest, where all were fine. Here, methinks, I see the Com-

parison

* Vult dicere Propheta, in JEHOVA esse id propter quod Peccator respiscens & credens, a Peccatis absolvi, & jure ad Benedictionem celestem donari queat ut debeat: esse illud JEHOVE proprium; ab ipso querendum; quod extra ipsum non invenitur.

Vitringa.

† Isai. xlv. 25.

‡ Isai. lxi. 10.

|| Cant. i. 9.

parison realized. *Christians*, endued with such a Spirit, as breathes in this animated Text, are like a Collection of those gallant and majestic Steeds; not destined to low Drudgery, but appointed to run in the royal Chariot; all Life; full of Fire; champing the Bit, and eager for the Chase. Nothing can more beautifully describe a State of Exultation and Ardour, than the preceding Similitude, or the following Words.—*I will rejoice; I will greatly rejoice; my very Soul, and all that is within me, shall be joyful in my GOD.* Wherefore? Because *He has clothed me, undone Sinner as I am, with the Garments of Salvation: because He hath covered me, defective as all my Services are, with the Robe of Righteousness.* A Robe, that hides every Sin, which in Thought, Word, or Deed, I have committed. A Robe, which screens from the Sword of Justice, the Curse of the Law, and all the Vengeance which my Iniquities have deserved. A Robe, which adorns and dignifies my Soul; renders it fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and meet for the Inheritance of Saints in Light.

Having represented this Righteousness, in a Variety of grand and charming Views—the Prophet farther characterizes it, as the *unalterable and never-failing* Origin of our Justification and Happiness. This he displays by a Train of Images, bold and sublime to the last Degree. *Lift up your Eyes to the Heavens, and*

look upon the Earth beneath: for the Heavens shall vanish away like Smoke, and the Earth shall wax old like a Garment; but my Salvation shall be for ever, and my Righteousness shall not be abolished.*

—Observe the vast Dimensions, and the firm Foundations, both of the upper and the lower World. How strong, how stedfast, they all appear! Yet these, indissoluble as they may seem, shall perish. This mighty Globe, on which Mountains rise and Oceans roll, shall lose its beautiful Gloss, and be laid aside like a decayed Garment. Even that mightier Concave, in which Stars are fixed, and Planets revolve, shall be deprived of its very superior Lustre, and vanish away like the dissolving Smoke.—*But my Salvation*, with all the spiritual and heavenly Blessings included in it, shall subsist and flourish for ever. *And my Righteousness*, which is the meritorious Cause of all, shall never be abolished.—Whether there be moral Virtues, they shall be found wanting; whether there be *christian* Graces, they shall prove ineffectual; but my Obedience and my Satisfaction, neither need Addition, nor admit of Change; they are *all-sufficient* and *everlasting*.

When *Day* arises on our benighted Hemisphere, it opens and spreads by a *gradual* Increase. Forming, first, the grey Twilight;
next,

* *Isai. li. 6.*

next, the blushing Morn; then, the clear Shining; till all is heightened into the Blaze and Glow of Noon.—When *Spring* revisits our wintry Clime, She also advances by gentle *Degrees*. First, swells the Bud, and protrudes the Gem; then, expands the Leaf, and unfolds the Blossom: the Face of Things is continually changing for the better; and Nature shews herself, almost every Hour, in some new and more engaging Dress.—This leisurely Process, renders the *strong* Effulgence of the celestial Orb, more supportable; and the *lovely* Expansions of the vegetable Creation, more observable.

So progressive and increasing are the Displays of *JESUS CHRIST*, exhibited in the Scriptures. Whose Appearance is unspeakably *more delightful* to the Soul, than the Emanations of orient Light are to the Eye, or the Graces of the vernal Season to our other Senses.—The Gloom of fallen *Adam* was alleviated by a Ray from this Sun of Righteousness.—*Abraham* and the Patriarchs saw afar off the blessed *JESUS*, *as the Morning spread upon the Mountains* *.—The *Psalmist* and the Prophets, beheld his nearer Approaches, like the Sun upon the point of Rising.—To the Apostles and Evangelists He arose, in perfect Lustre, and complete Beauty. The Blessings and Privileges,

* *Joel* ii. 2.

privileges, which *dawned* under other Dispensations of Religion, are *brought* even to meridian *Light* by the Gospel.—This I mention, just to intimate, what You may expect from a following Letter.

In the mean Time, let Us attend to the Prophet *Daniel*. He records a Message from Heaven, which is more clearly descriptive of this great evangelical Blessing, than all the foregoing Texts.—He had been under much Distress, and in great Perplexity: afflicted for his own, and his Countrymens Sins; anxious for the Welfare of the chosen Nation, and the Prosperity of true Religion. When an Angel was dispatched to the holy Mourner, with this most cheering News; which, received by Faith, is the *richest* Balm to a wounded Conscience, and the *only* Remedy for a guilty World. *Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy holy City; to finish the Transgression, and make an End of Sin; to make Reconciliation for Iniquity; and to bring in everlasting Righteousness* *.—This Prophecy relates to the MESSIAH. It foretels, that, in the Fulness of Time, He should *finish the Transgression* †; restrain and suppress the Power of Corruption, by purifying to Himself a peculiar People—Should *make an End of Sin* ‡; by sealing up or secreting its Guilt, and totally abolishing

* Dan. ix. 24.

† כלה

‡ חתם

lishing its condemning Power—Should *make Reconciliation for Iniquity*; by sustaining the Vengeance due to Sinners, and fully satisfying the divine Justice for all their Offences—Should not barely publish, but accomplish and *bring in a Righteousness**; that it may be presented both to GOD and Man; to GOD, for the Reparation of his violated Law; to Man, for the Justification of his obnoxious Person—That this Righteousness should be *everlasting*; not such as may be compared to the *Morning Cloud*, which passeth away; or to the *early Dew*, which is soon dried up; but such as will outlast the *Hills*, on which the latter shines; and outlast the *Skies*, through which the former sails. A Righteousness, whose Merits extend to every Period and every Action of our Lives; and when once made ours by Imputation, remains and will remain our unalienable Property.—To this all the Saints, who, in antient Generations, pleased GOD, owe their Acceptance; on this, all the Children of Men, who, in future Ages, hope for his Mercy, must rely; by this the whole Assembly of the Blessed, shall be invariably and eternally precious in his Sight.

* מְבִיטִי I think, must signify more than to *publish* or *preach*. Had this been all that the Angel was commissioned to declare, מְבִיטִי or מְבִיטִי would probably have been used.—The Word implies *such a bringing in* (the Original is the same) as when *Abel* brought his Sacrifice to the Altar, for the divine Acceptance; and *Esau* brought his Venison into the Chamber, for his Father's Use. Gen. iv. 4. xxvii. 31.

Sight.—Exalted Character! Can it be applicable to any Thing less, than the Righteousness of the incarnate GOD? Surely, None can imagine, that *Daniel* would speak in such a magnificent Strain of any human Righteousness; since, in this very Chapter, he professedly depreciates Himself, his Fellow-saints, and all human Performances.

I forgot, in the proper Place, to consult the Prophet *Jeremiab*. Let Us now refer Ourselves to his Determination. Celebrating the SAVI-OUR of *Judab and Israel*, He says; *This is his Name, whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*. A Determination, so clear and satisfactory, as not to leave, One would almost conclude, any Room for Appeal.—Should the Sense of the Passage be questioned, I think, there cannot be a more authentic Explication, than the preceding Extracts from *Isaiah* and *Daniel*. And having the unanimous Attestation of two inspired Penmen, We may venture to abide by such Authority, even in Opposition to some respectable Names.—In the Verse immediately foregoing, the essential Holiness of the REDEEMER was displayed, under the Character of the RIGHTEOUS BRANCH.—The Sanctity, which He should confer on his Subjects, was intimated by his *executing Judgment and Justice in the Earth*.—In the Clause, We have quoted, his *imputed* Right-

Righteousness is foretold and promised.—Thus the several Sentences are distinct; the Description of the SAVIOUR is complete; and He appears perfectly suited to the Exigencies of a wretched World; in their worst Estate, inflamed to Satan, and in their best, falling short of the Glory of GOD.—This therefore I take to be the grand and extensive Meaning of the Prophet; not barely, The righteous LORD; not barely, The LORD who infuses Righteousness into sinful Souls; but the incarnate JEHOVAH*, whose *mediatorial* Righteousness is, by an Act of gracious Imputation, *ours*—to all the Intents of Justification and Salvation, *ours*—as much ours for these blessed Purposes, as if We had wrought it out, each in his own Person.

Foreseeing and contemplating these Blessings, the enraptured *Zechariab* cries out; *Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Sion; shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto Thee: He is just, and having Salvation, lowly and riding upon an Ass, and upon a Colt the Foal of*

* *Jerem. xxiii. 5, 6.* In these golden, infinitely better than golden Verses, is characterized the *divine* and the *human* Nature of *CHRIST*, together with his *mediatorial* Office. The *divine* Nature; in that He enjoys the Honours of the GODHEAD, and possesses the incommunicable Name JEHOVAH.—The *human* Nature; in that He was to be raised up unto *David*, and spring as a Branch from his Root.—The *mediatorial* Office; in that He is the *Righteousness* of his People, and the *Salvation* of Sinners.

of an *Ass* *.—He addresses himself to *Sion* and *Jerusalem*, to the ecclesiastical and civil Community. Persons of all Ranks and of every Character, are exhorted to *rejoice*; to rejoice *greatly*; nay, to express the Joy of their Heart, by loud *Hallelujahs*, and triumphant *Exclamations*.—What is the Cause of this general Delight? What can fill both Church and State with such high Satisfaction? *Thy King cometh unto Thee*; even that glorious KING, who rules in Heaven, and rules in the Heart; whose Service is Freedom, and whose Laws are Love.—*He is just*; divinely righteous in his Nature, and He cometh to fulfil all Righteousness in thy Stead. *Having Salvation*; hereby procuring Salvation for his People; Deliverance from Sin, from Death, and Hell; from every Evil Thou deservest, and from every Misery Thou fearest. — That none may be discouraged, and none deterred, from applying to this PRINCE OF PEACE, He is, amidst all the Honours of his Sovereignty, *lowly*: does not abhor the Basest, will not despise the Meanest: to the Poor his Gospel is preached, and for the Guilty his Benefits are intended.—As a Proof of this most amiable and condescending Goodness, *He will ride*, not like the Conquerors of old, in a triumphal Chariot, or on a richly caparisoned Steed, but upon the most despicable of all Animals, an *Ass*: nay, what

* Zech. ix. 9.

what is still more despicable, on a rude undisciplined Colt, the wayward Foal of an Ass*.

And

* Because some profane Scoffers have presumed to ridicule this very remarkable Incident of our LORD's Life, some Interpreters of Note have endeavoured to rescue it from their abusive Attempts, by observing,—“ That the Eastern Asses are much larger and more graceful than ours. That Patriarchs and Judges thought it no Disgrace to ride upon them.”

This Observation has, I fear, more of *false Delicacy*, than of *real Truth*, or *christian Simplicity*. In the Patriarchal Ages, I acknowledge, Persons of High Distinction thought it no Dishonour, in their Journeys and Processions, to appear on this Animal. But I very much question, whether the same Fashion subsisted, or the same Way of Thinking prevailed, in the Reign of *Tiberius Cæsar*. See *Jam. iii. 3*.—Nay, I am strongly inclined to suspect, that this plain primitive Custom was superseded, even in the Days of *Zechariah*. For, long before this Time I find, that *Solomon had four thousand Stalls of Horses for his Chariots, and twelve thousand Horsemen; and that Horses were brought to Him out of Egypt; and divers other Countries.* 1 Kings iv. 26. x. 28, 29. From this Period, it is probable, none but the poor and inferior Sort of People rode upon Asses.—When *Isaiah* prophesied, *The Land was full of Horses.* Maii ii. 7. Under the Persian Monarchy, when *Zechariah* flourished, Horses were in still higher Repute. Well therefore might the Prophet say, with Wonder and Delight—*lowly and riding upon an Ass!*

Was it a mean Attitude? Exceedingly mean? Mean even to Contempt? I make no scruple to grant it: nay, I make my Boast of it! It is for the Honour of my LORD's Condescension: it is for the utter Confusion of all worldly Pomp and Grandeur: and it is for the unspeakable Comfort of my sinful Soul.—Most charming Humility! Most indearing Gentleness! HE, who rideth upon the Heavens as it were upon an Horse, and maketh the Clouds his Chariot, to atone for my Pride, and to encourage my Hope, disdained not, in the Days of his Flesh, to ride upon an Ass.

They, who would dignify this Action, any otherwise than from its ever to be admired Abasement, seem to have forgotten

And now—since my *Theron* confesses Himself to be *miserable, and poor, and naked*: since the Eyes of his Understanding are enlightened, to see the Impurity of his Heart, the Imperfection of his Righteousness, and that He is, in Himself, a lost undone Sinner—what Advice, chearing and salutary, shall I give? O! let Him listen to an Adviser, infinitely more able and compassionate. Listen to Him, who is the Antient of Days, and the Wisdom of GOD; *I counsel Thee*, says the blessed *JESUS*, *to buy of me Gold tried in the Fire, that Thou mayest be rich; and white Raiment, that Thou mayest be clothed* *.—*Gold!* What can this denote, but all those spiritual Treasures, which are hid in *CHRIST*? Which are, in Measure, unsearchable; in Value, inestimable; in Duration, eternal.—*White Raiment!* Surely this must signify the Righteousness of our *REDEEMER*; which is all Purity, and all Perfection. Which clothes the Soul, as a most suitable and commodious Garment; which covers every Deformity and every Sin; and presents the Believer, free from Shame, and free from Blemish, before the Throne of the *MAJESTY* in the Heavens.

This, gotten the Stable and the Manger. They, who are offended at this Circumstance, and ashamed to own their *LORD* in his deep Humiliation, have but very imperfectly learned the Apostle's Lesson; *GOD forbid, that I should glory, save in the CROSS of CHRIST JESUS my LORD.*

* *Rev.* iii. 18.

This, to use the delicate Language, and amiable Images of *Isaiab*—*This Doctrine, embraced by a realizing Faith, is the only Pillow of Rest, wherewith Ye may cause the weary and heavy-laden Soul to find Repose; and this is the sovereign Cordial, prepared by infinite Mercy, for the Refreshment of anxious and desponding Transgressors. O! Let Us not be in the Number of those proud and refractory Creatures, who, though they infinitely needed, yet would not bear * the gracious News, nor receive the unspeakable Benefit.—In this Respect, and in this most eminently, is that other Saying of the same sublime Teacher, true; The LORD of Hosts shall be for a Crown of Glory, and for a Diadem of Beauty, to the Residue of his People†. Shall we tear from our Temples, or reject with Disdain, this unfading and heavenly Ornament; in order to substitute a mean and tawdry Chaplet of our own?*

Let me add a pertinent Passage from one of our admired *dramatic Writers*. Which, if proper in *his Sense*, will be incomparably more so, according to *our Manner of Application*.

*It were contemning,
With impious self-sufficient Arrogance,
This Bounty of our GOD, not to accept,
With every Mark of Honour, such a Gift.*

* *Isai.* xxviii. 12.

† *Isai.* xxviii. 5.

I might proceed to urge this Expostulation of the Poet, as I might easily have multiplied my Quotations from holy Writ. But, studious of Brevity, I leave both, without farther Inlargement, to your own Meditation. Yet, more studious of my Friend's Happiness, I cannot conclude without wishing Him an Interest, a clear and established Interest, in this everlasting Righteousness of *CHRIST*. For so, and only so, can He have *everlasting Consolation and good Hope through Grace*.

Inviolably Yours,

ASPASIO.

P. S. Opposite to the Room in which I write, is a most agreeable Prospect of the Gardens and the Fields. *These*, covered with Herbage, and loaded with Corn: *those* adorned with Flowers, and abounding with Esculents. All appearing with so florid and so beautiful an Aspect, that they really seem, in Conformity to the *Psalmist's* Description, even to *laugh and sing*.—Let me just observe, That all these fine Scenes, all these rich Productions sprung—from what? From the *Dissolution* of the respective Seeds. The Seeds, planted by the Gardener, and the Grain sowed by the Husbandman, first perished in the Ground, and then the copious Increase arose.

Much

Much in the same Manner, a true Faith in *CHRIST* and his Righteousness arises— from what? From the *Ruins* of Self-sufficiency, and the *Death* of personal Excellency. Let me therefore intreat my *Theron*, still to take the Diary for his Counsellor; still to keep an Eye on the Depravity of his Nature and the Miscarriages of his Life. The more clearly We see, the more deeply We feel, our Guilt and our Misery, the more highly shall We value the Obedience of our blessed SURETY.—In such a Heart, Faith will flourish as a Rose, and lift up its Head as a Cedar in *Lebanon*. To such a Soul, the great REDEEMER's Righteousness will be welcome, as Waters to the thirsty Soil, or as Rivers in the sandy Desert.



LETTER V.

ASPASIO to THERON.

DEAR THERON,

GIVE me leave to relate an uncommon Accident; which happened a little while ago, in this Neighbourhood; and of which I myself was a Spectator.—The Day was the Sab-

Sabbath; the Place appropriated to divine Worship, was the Scene of this *remarkable* Affair.

A Boy came running into the Church, breathless and trembling. He told, but in a low Voice, those who stood near, that a Press-Gang * was advancing, to besiege the Doors, and arrest the Sailors.—An Alarm was immediately taken. The Seamen, with much Hurry, and no small Anxiety, began to shift for themselves. The rest of the Congregation, perceiving an unusual Stir, were struck with Surprise, —A Whisper of Inquiry ran from Seat to Seat; which increased, by Degrees, into a confused Murmur. No One could inform his Neighbour; therefore, every One was left to solve the Appearance, from the Suggestions of a *timorous Imagination*. Some suspected, the Town was on Fire. Some were apprehensive of an Invasion from the *Spaniards*. Others looked up, and looked round, to see if the Walls were not giving way, and the Roof falling upon their Heads.—In a few Moments, the

* The Reader, it is hoped, will excuse whatever may appear *low*, or savour of the *Plebeian*, in any of these Circumstances. If *Aspasio* had set Himself to *invent* the Description of a Pannic, He would probably have formed it upon some more raised and dignified Incident. But as this was a real *Matter of Fact*, which lately happened in one of our *Sea-Port Towns*; Truth, even in a plain Dress, may possibly be no less acceptable than Fiction, tricked up in the most splendid Embellishments.

the Consternation became general. The Men stood like Statues, in silent Amazement, and unavailing Perplexity. The Women shrieked aloud; fell into Fits; sunk to the Ground in a Swoon. All was *Trepidation* and tumultuous *Clamour*.—Drowned was the Preacher's Voice, and quite disregarded his Message. Had He spoke in Thunder, He would scarce have been heard. To have gone on with his Work, amidst such a prodigious Ferment, would have been like arguing with a Whirl-wind, or talking to a Tempest.

This brought to my Mind that great *tremendous Day*, when the Heavens will pass away; when the Earth will be dissolved; and all its Inhabitants receive their final Doom.—If, at such Incidents of very inferior Dread, our Hearts are ready to fail; what *unknown* and *inconceivable* Astonishment must seize the guilty Conscience, when the Hand of the ALMIGHTY shall open those unparalleled Scenes of Wonder, Desolation, and Horror!—When the Trumpet shall sound—The Dead arise—The World be in Flames—The JUDGE on the Throne—and all Mankind at the Bar!

The Trumpet shall sound *, says the prophetic Teacher. And how startling, how stupendous the Summons! Nothing equal to it, nothing like it, was ever heard through all

* 1 Cor. xv. 52.

all the Regions of the Universe, or all the Revolutions of Time.—When conflicting Armies have *discharged* the bellowing Artillery of War, or when victorious Armies have *shouted* for Joy of the Conquest, the Seas and Shores have rung, the Mountains and Plains have echoed. But the Shout of the Arch-angel, and the Trump of GOD, will resound from Pole to Pole. Will pierce the Center, and shake the Pillars of Heaven.—Stranger, stranger still! It will penetrate even the Recesses of the Tomb. It will pour its amazing Thunder into the Abodes of Silence. The Dead, the very Dead, shall hear.

When the Trumpet has sounded, *the Dead shall arise*.—In a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, the Graves open; the monumental Piles are cleft asunder; and the Nations under Ground start into Day. What an immense Harvest of Men and Women, springing up from the Caverns of the Earth, and the Depths of the Sea! Stand a-while my Soul, and consider the wonderful Spectacle.—*Adam* formed in Paradise, and the Babe born but Yesterday, the earliest Ages, and latest Generations, meet upon the same Level. *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, People of all Climes and Languages, unite in the promiscuous Throng. Here, those vast Armies, which, like Swarms of Locusts, covered Countries; which, with
an

an irresistible Sweep, over-run Empires; here they all appear, and here they all are lost. Lost, like the small Drop of a Bucket, when plunged into the unfathomable and boundless Ocean.—O! the Multitudes! The Multitudes! which these Eyes shall survey, when GOD *calletb the Heavens from above, and the Earth that He may judge his People.* What Shame must flush the guilty Cheek! What Anguish wound the polluted Breast! To have all their *filthy* Practices, and *infamous* Tempers, exposed before this innumerable Croud of Witnesses!—Fly, my *Tberon*; and fly, my Soul; instantly let Us fly, earnestly let Us fly, to the purifying Blood of *JESUS*. That all our Sins may be blotted out; that We may be found *unblameable* and *unreproveable*, in the Presence of the assembled World; and, what is infinitely more to be revered, in the Sight of the omnipotent GOD.

When the Swarm issues, the Hive will *burn*. There is no more Need of this habitable Globe. The Elect have fought the good Fight, and finished their Course. The Wicked have been tried, and found incorrigible. The important Drama is ended: every Actor has performed his Part: now therefore the Scenes are taken down, and the Stage is demolished.—*Woe be to the Earth, and to the Works thereof!* Its Streams are turned into Pitch, its Dust into Brimstone; and the Breath of the ALMIGH-

TY, like a Torrent of Fire, inkindles the Whole. See ! see ! how the Conflagration rages—spreads—prevails over all ! The Forests are in a Blaze, and the Mountains are wrapt in Flame. Cities, Kingdoms, Continents, sink in the burning Deluge. *London, Britain, Europe* are no more. Through all the Receptacles of Water, through all the Tracts of Land, through the whole Extent of Air, nothing is discernable, but one vast, prodigious, fiery Ruin.—Where now are the *Treasures* of the Covetous ? Where the *Possessions* of the Mighty ? Where the *Delights* of the Voluptuous ?—How wise, how happy are they, whose Portion is lodged in heavenly Mansions ! Whose Inheritance is incorruptible and undefiled ! Such as the last Fire cannot reach, nor the Dissolution of Nature impair.

But see ! The azure Vault cleaves. The Expanse of Heaven is rolled back like a Scroll : and the JUDGE, the JUDGE appears ! *He cometh*, cries a mighty Seraph, the Herald of his Approach, *He cometh to judge the World in Righteousness, and minister true Judgment unto the People !*—He cometh, not as formerly, in the Habit of a Servant, but clad with uncreated Glory, and magnificently attended with the Armies of Heaven. Angels and Arch-angels stand before Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand of those celestial Spirits minister unto

unto Him.—Behold Him, ye faithful Followers of the LAMB; and wonder and love. This is HE, who bore all *your* Iniquities on the ignominious Cross. This is HE, who fulfilled all Righteousness for the Justification of *your* Persons.—Behold Him, ye Despisers of his Grace; and wonder and perish. This is HE, whose merciful Overtures you have *contemned*, and on whose precious Blood You have *trampled*.

The great *white Throne* *, beyond Description august and formidable, is erected. The KING of Heaven, the LORD of Glory, takes his Seat on the dreadful Tribunal. *Mercy*, on his Right-hand, displays the Olive-Branch of *Peace*, and holds forth the Crown of Righteousness. *Justice*, on his Left, poises the impartial Scale, and unsheaths the Sword of Vengeance. While *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, brighter than ten thousand Suns, beam in his divine Aspect.—What are all the preceding Events, to this new Scene of Dignity and Awe? Peals of united Thunder, sounding in the Arch-angel's Trumpet; the Blaze of a burning World, and the strong Convulsions of expiring Nature; the unnumbered Myriads of human Creatures, starting into instantaneous Existence, and thronging the astonished Skies; all these seem *familiar* Incidents, compared

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with

* Rev. XX, 11.

with the Appearance of the incarnate JEHOVAH.—Amazement, more than Amazement, is all around. Terror and Glory unite in their Extremes. From the Menace of his majestic Eye, from the insupportable Splendors of his Face, the Earth itself and the very Heavens *flee away**.—How then? Oh! how shall the Ungodly *stand*? Stand in his angry Presence, and draw near to this consuming Fire?

Yet draw near they must, and take their Tryal—their decisive Tryal at his righteous Bar. Every Action comes under Examination. For each idle Word they must give Account. Not so much as a secret Thought escapes this exact Scrutiny.—The Criminals, the impenitent Criminals, can neither conceal their Guilt, nor elude the Sentence. They have to do with a Sagacity, *too keen* to be deceived; with a Power, *too strong* to be resisted; and (O! terrible, terrible Consideration!) with a Severity of most just Displeasure, that will *never* relent, *never* be intreated more.—What ghastly Despair lours on their pale Looks! What rack-ing Agonies rend their distracted Hearts! The bloody Ax and the torturing Wheel, are Ease, are Down, compared with their prodigious Woe. And (O holy GOD! wonderful in thy Doings! fearful in thy Judgments!) even this prodigious Woe is the *gentlest* of Visitations,

com-

* Rev. xx. 11.

compared with that Indignation and Wrath, which are hanging over their guilty Heads—which are even now falling on all the Sons of Rebellion—which will plunge them deep in aggravated and endless Destruction.

*And is there a last Day? and must there come
A sure, a fixed, irrevocable Doom?*

Surely then, to use the Words of a pious Prelate *, it should be “ the main Care of our
“ Lives and Deaths, what shall give Us Peace
“ and Acceptation before the dreadful Tri-
“ bunal of GOD. What but Righteousness?
“ What Righteousness or whose? Ours or
“ CHRIST’s? Ours, in the inherent Graces
“ wrought in Us, in the holy Works wrought
“ by Us? Or CHRIST’s, in his most perfect
“ Obedience and meritorious Satisfaction,
“ wrought for Us, and applied to Us? The
“ *Popish* Faction is for the former. We *Pro-*
“ *testants* are for the latter. GOD is as direct
“ on our Side, as his Word can make Him;
“ every where blazoning the Defects of our
“ own Righteousness, every where extolling the
“ perfect Obedience of our REDEEMER’s.”

Behold! says the everlasting KING, *I lay in*
Sion, for a Foundation, a Stone; a tried Stone;
a precious Corner-stone; a sure Foundation: HE
THAT BELIEVETH, SHALL NOT MAKE HASTE †.

D d 3

As

* Bishop Hall.

† *Isai.* xxviii. 16.

As this Text contains so noble a Display of our SAVIOUR's consummate Ability for his great Work; as it is admirably calculated, to preserve the Mind from distressing Fears, and to settle it in a steady Tranquillity; You will give me leave to touch it cursorily with my Pen. Just as I should descant upon it in Conversation, was I now sitting in one of your agreeable Arbors, and enjoying your more agreeable Company,

How beautiful the Gradation! How lively the Description! and how very important the practical Improvement! Or I might say, the Inscription that is engraven on this wonderful Stone.—*Behold!* Intended to rouse and fix our most attentive Regard. The GOD of Heaven speaks. He speaks, and every Syllable is Balm; every Sentence is rich with Consolation. If ever therefore We have Ears to hear, let it be to this SPEAKER, and on this Occasion.

A Stone. Every Thing else is sliding Sand, is yielding Air, is a breaking Bubble. Wealth will prove a vain Shadow; Honour an empty Breath; Pleasure a delusory Dream; our own Righteousness a Spider's Web. If on these We rely, Disappointment must ensue, and Shame be inevitable. Nothing but CHRIST, nothing but CHRIST, can stably support our *spiritual Interests*, and realize our Expectations of *true Happiness*. And, blessed be the divine Good-

Goodness ! He is, for this Purpose, not a Stone only, but

A tried Stone. Tried, in the Days of his Humanity, by all the Vehemence of Temptations, and all the Weight of Afflictions : yet, like Gold from the Furnace, rendered more shining and illustrious by the fiery Scrutiny.— Tried, under the Capacity of a SAVIOUR, by Millions and Millions of depraved, wretched, ruined Creatures ; who have always found Him *perfectly able*, and as *perfectly willing*, to expiate the most enormous Guilt—to deliver from the most inveterate Corruptions—and save, to the very uttermost, all that come unto GOD through Him.

A Corner-stone. That not only sustains, but unites the Edifice : incorporating both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, Believers of various Languages, and manifold Denominations—here, in one harmonious Bond of brotherly Love—hereafter, in one common Participation of eternal Joy.

A precious Stone. More precious than Rubies ; the Pearl of great Price ; and the Desire of all Nations. Precious, with regard to the divine Dignity of his Person, and the unequalled Excellency of his mediatorial Offices. In these, and in all respects, greater than *Jonah*—wiser than *Solomon*—fairer than the Children of Men—chiefest among ten thousand—and, to the

awakened Sinner, or inlightened Believer, *al-*
together lovely *.

A sure Foundation †. Such as no Pressure
can shake: equal, more than equal to every
Weight; even to Sin, the heaviest Load in the
World.—*The Rock of Ages*; such as never has
failed, never will fail, those humble Penitents,
who cast their Burden upon the LORD RE-
DEEMER; who roll all ‡ their Guilt, and
fix

* Cant. v. 16.

† *Fundamentum fundatissimum.*

‡ *Roll*—this is the exact Sense of the sacred Phrase,
לִי לֹא יָדָעְתִּי *Psal.* xxii. 8. xxxvii. 5. *Prov.* xvi. 3. I am
not ignorant, that some People have presumed to *censure*, and
many have been *shy* of using, this bold and vigorous Meta-
phor. Which nevertheless appears to me, of all others the
most just, the most significant, and therefore the most *truly*
beautiful.

A Burden, that is manageable and comparatively light,
We cast, we throw. But that which is extremely ponderous
and quite unwieldy, we move only by rolling. Accordingly,
Stones of an enormous Size, are called by the Oriental
Writers, *Stones of Rolling*, *Ezra* v. 8. — Consider the Ex-
pression in this View, and nothing can represent, with greater
or with equal Energy, that prodigious Load, which,
heavier than the Sand of the Sea, oppresses the guilty Con-
science.—By substituting any other Word, *We* infeeble and
dilute the Sense: *We* lose the capital and striking Idea.

Vain Man would be wise. Let Him not then, for the Cre-
dit of his Ingenuity, adventure to correct the Language of
Omniscience. This, if any Thing in Nature, is

Periculosa plenum Opus Alac.

This will be sure to discover, not his fine Taste, but his
groveling Apprehension, and his *rampant* Pride. To im-
prove, with the Painter's Brush, the glowing Colours of the
Rainbow; to heighten, by Fuller's Soap, the Lustre of the
new fallen Snows; would be a more modest Attempt, and a
much easier Task, than to make an *Index expurgatorius*, or
a Table of *Errata*, when the SPIRIT of Inspiration dictates,

fix their whole Hopes, on this immoveable Basis.—Or, as the Words *may* be rendered, *A Foundation**! *A Foundation*! There is a fine Spirit of Vehemency in the Sentence, thus understood. It speaks the Language of Exultation, and expresses an important Discovery. That which Mankind infinitely want; that which Multitudes seek, and find not; it is here! it is here! This, this is the Foundation for their Pardon, their Peace, their eternal Felicity.

Whosoever believeth, though pressed with Adversities, or surrounded by Dangers, *shall not make haste* †. But, free from tumultuous and perplexing Thoughts, preserved from rash and precipitate Steps, He shall possess his Soul in Pa-

• מוסר מוסר

† *Shall not make haste*, לא יחזק This metaphorical Expression, though it might be very intelligible to an *Hebrew*, is to an *English* Reader, like some fine Picture placed in a *disadvantageous* Light. We may possibly illustrate the Prophet's Meaning, and exemplify his Assertion, if We compare the Conduct of *Moses*, with that of the *Israelites*, on viewing the fatal Catastrophe of *Dathan* and *Abiram*.—When the Earth trembled under their Feet; when the Ground opened its horrid Jaws; when the presumptuous Sinners went down alive into the Pit; when the tremendous Chasm closed upon the screaming Wretches; the Children of Israel, it is written, *fled at the Cry of them*. Fled, in wild and hasty Confusion; *for they said, Lest the Earth swallow up Us also*.—But *Moses*, who denounced the dreadful Doom; *Moses*, who was sure of the divine Protection; *Moses* made no such precipitate or disorderly *haste*. He stood calm and composed: saw the whole alarming Transaction, without any uneasy Emotions of Fear, or any unnecessary Attempts to escape. So that *his Behaviour* seems to be a very good Comment on *Isaiab's Phrase*. See *Numb. xvi*,

Patience. Knowing the Sufficiency of those Merits, and the Fidelity of that Grace, on which he has reposed his Confidence, shall quietly and without Perturbation wait for an expected End.—And not only amidst the perilous or disastrous Changes of Life, but even in the Day of everlasting Judgment, such Persons shall *stand with Boldness*. They shall *look up*, to the grand ARBITRATOR—*look round*, on all the Solemnity of his Appearance—*look forward*, to the unalterable Sentence—and neither feel Anxiety, nor fear Damnation.

*Such, in that Day of Terrors, shall be seen
To face the Thunders with a godlike Mein.
The Planets drop; their Thoughts are fix'd above:
The Center shakes; their Hearts disdain to move.*

This Portion of Scripture, which, I hope, will both delight and edify my Friend, recalls our Attention to the Subject of my present Letter—to those propitiatory Sufferings, and that justifying Righteousness, which, imputed to Sinners, are the Ground of their Comfort, and the Strength of their Salvation.—And what say the Writers of the *New Testament* upon this Point? They, whose Understandings were opened by the “WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR,” to discern the Meaning of the antient Oracles. Who must therefore be the most competent Judges of their true Import, and

and our surest Guides in settling their Sense.

—Do *they* patronize our Interpretation of the Prophets? Do *they* set their Seal to the Authenticity of our Doctrine?

St. Luke, in his ecclesiastical History, has preserved this weighty Declaration of the Apostles; *We believe, that, through the Grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, We shall be saved, even as they* *. Here the Thing is implied.—St. Peter, in the Introduction to one of his Theological Epistles, thus addresses his happy Correspondents: *To them that have obtained like precious Faith, in the Righteousness † of our GOD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.* Here the Point is expressly asserted.—With equal Clearness is the Doctrine delivered by Matthew the Evangelist; *Seek ye first the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness ‡.* What can the Kingdom of GOD mean? An Experience of the Power, and an Enjoyment of the Privileges of the Gospel. What are we to understand by *his Righteousness*? Surely, the Righteousness which

* Acts. xv. 11.

† 2 Pet. i. 1. The Phrase is *τῆς δικαιοσύνης*. If We retain the common Translation, it proves another very momentous Truth: that *the Righteousness of our GOD, even of our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST,* is the one meritorious procuring Cause of *all* Spiritual Blessings; of Faith, as well as of Fruition; of Grace, as well as of Glory.

‡ Matt. vi. 33.

is worthy of this grand Appellation, and peculiar to that blessed Institution.

Would We learn, What is the great and distinguishing Peculiarity of the Gospel? St. Paul informs Us; *Therein the Righteousness of GOD is revealed, from Faith to Faith.* As this Text leads Us into the Epistle to the Romans—as this Epistle is, for the *Propriety* of its Method, as well as for the *Importance* of its Doctrine, singularly excellent—it may not be amiss, to examine its Structure, and inquire into its Design.

The Apostle writes to a promiscuous People: who had been converted, partly from *Judaism*, partly from *Gentilism*. His Aim is, to strike at the very Root of their former Errors respectively—to turn them *wholly* to the superabundant Grace of GOD, and establish them *solely* on the all-sufficient Merits of *CHRIST*.

The *Gentiles* were, for the most Part, grossly ignorant of GOD, and stupidly negligent of invisible Interests. If any among them had a Sense of Religion, their Virtues, they imagined, were meritorious of all that the DEITY could bestow. If they fell into Sin; Sin, they supposed, might easily be obliterated by Repentance; or compensated by a Train of Sacrifices*. A few of their judicious Sages taught,

* See *Witsii Animadversiones Irenicæ*. Cap. vii.—A choice little Piece of polemical Divinity, perhaps the very best that

that the most probable Means of securing the divine Favour, was a sincere Reformation of Life.

The *Jews*, it is well known, placed a mighty Dependence on their Affinity to *Abraham*, and the Covenant made with their Fathers; on their Adherence to the Letter of the moral Law, and their scrupulous Performance of ceremonial Institutions.—*Gentiles* and *Jews* agreeing in this Mistake, that they looked for the Pardon of Guilt, and the Attainment of Happiness, from some Services done, or some Qualities acquired by *Themselves*.

Against these Errors the zealous Apostle draws his Pen. He enters the Lists like a true Champion of *CHRIST*, in the most spirited and

is extant. In which the most important Controversies are fairly stated, accurately discussed, and judiciously determined; with a *Perspicuity* of Sense, and a *Solidity* of Reasoning, that are exceeded by nothing, but the remarkable *Conciseness*, and the still more remarkable *Candour* of the Sentiments.

The *Oeconomia Fœderum*, written by the same Hand, is a Body of Divinity; in its Method so *well digested*—in its Doctrines so *truly evangelical*—and (what is not very usual with our systematic Writers) in its Language so *refined* and *elegant*—in its Manner so *affectionate* and *animating*—that I would venture to recommend it, to every young Student in Divinity: I would not scruple to risk all my Reputation upon the Merits of this Performance: and I cannot but lament it, as one of my greatest Losses, that I was *no sooner* acquainted with this most excellent Author.—All whose Works, have such a Delicacy of Composition, and such a sweet Savour of Holiness, that I know not any Comparison more proper to represent their true Character, than *the golden Pot which had Manna*; and was—outwardly, *bright* with burnished Gold—inwardly, *rich* with heavenly Food.

and heroic Manner imaginable. *I am not ashamed of the Gospel of CHRIST*: for, however it may be deemed Foolishness by the polite *Greeks*, or prove a Stumbling-block to the carnal *Jews*, it is the Power of GOD unto * *Salvation*: is the grand Instrument, which he has ordained for this blessed Purpose, and which he will certainly crown with the desired Success.—Whence has the Gospel this very peculiar Power? Because, therein a *Righteousness* is revealed; a true and perfect Righteousness, which furnishes a solid Title to eternal Life.—What Righteousness is this? The Righteousness not of Man, but of GOD. Which was promised by GOD in the Scriptures; was introduced by GOD in the Person of his SON; and, on Account of its consummate Excellency, is both acceptable and available in his Sight.

This Righteousness is *from Faith to Faith*†: held forth, as it were, by an offering GOD, and apprehended by a believing Soul. Who, first, gives a firm *Assent* to the Gospel; then, cordially *accepts* its Blessings. From a Conviction that the Doctrine is true, passes to a Persuasion that the Privileges are his own.—When this is effected, a Foundation is laid for all Happiness; a Principle is wrought, to produce all Holiness.

But

* *Rom. i. 16.*

† *Rom. i. 17.*

But why was it requisite, that such a Righteousness should be provided by GOD, and revealed in the Gospel?—Because, neither the *Gentiles* nor the *Jews* had, or could attain any Righteousness of their own; and this Righteousness, though so absolutely necessary for their fallen State, was infinitely remote from all human Apprehensions. The latter Assertion is self-evident. The former is particularly demonstrated.—First, with regard to the *Gentiles*; the Generality of whom, were abandoned to the most scandalous Excesses; and they who had escaped the grosser Pollutions, fell short in the Duties of natural Religion.—Next, with regard to the *Jews*; Many of whom lived in open Violation of the external Commandment; and not One of them acted up to the internal Purity, required by the *Mosaic* Precepts.—From which Premises, this Conclusion is deduced; that each of them had transgressed even *their own* Rule of Action; that all of them were, on this Account, utterly inexcusable; therefore *by the Works of the Law*, whether dictated by Reason, or delivered by *Moses*, *no Flesh can be justified*.*

Left any should imagine, that Righteousness may be obtained, if not by a Conformity to the Law of Nature, or the Law of *Moses*, yet by an Observation of *Evangelical* Ordinances,

* *Rom.* iii. 20.

nances, He farther declares; That Sinners are *justified freely*, without any Regard to their own Endowments; *through the Redemption*, the complete Redemption of *JESUS CHRIST**. After such a Manner, as may lay them low in Humiliation, even while it exalts them to the Kingdom of Heaven. After such a Manner, as may bring Life and Salvation to their Souls, while all the Glory reverts to GOD the FATHER and his SON *JESUS CHRIST*.

In the Prosecution of this very momentous Subject, our sacred Disputant removes an Objection, which is as common, as it is plausible. *Do We make void the Law through Faith?* Do We render it a vain Institution; such as never has been, never will be fulfilled?—*GOD forbid!* This were a flagrant Dishonour to the Divine LEGISLATOR and his holy Commandments. Such as We would abhor, rather than countenance.—On the contrary, *We establish the Law*†; not only as We receive it for a *Rule of Life*, but as we expect no Salvation without a proper, without a *perfect* Conformity to its Injunctions.—How can this be effected? By qualifying its Sense, and softening it into an easier System? This were to *vacate* the Law; to deprive it of its Honours; and

* *Rom. iii. 24.*

† *Rom. iii. 31.* An incontestable Proof, that the Apostle treats of the *moral Law*.

and hinder it from attaining the due End, either of Obedience or Condemnation.—No; but We establish the Law, by believing in that great MEDIATOR, who has obeyed its every Precept; sustained its whole Penalty; and satisfied all its Requirements, in their utmost Extent.

Farther to corroborate his Scheme, He proves it from the renowned Examples of *Abraham* and *David*.—The Instance of *Abraham* is so clear, that it wants no Comment. Any Paraphrase would rather obscure, than illustrate it.—The other, derived from the Testimony of the *Psalmist*, may admit the Commentator's Tool. Yet not to hammer it into a new Form, but only to clear away the Rubbish; to rescue it from Misrepresentation; and place it in a true Light. *Even as David describeth the Blessedness of the Man, to whom GOD imputeth Righteousness without Works, saying; Blessed are They, whose Unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose Sins are covered: Blessed is the Man, to whom the LORD will not impute Sin*.*—Here is *Imputation* asserted—The Imputation of *Righteousness*—Of *Righteousness without Works*; without any Respect to, or any Co-operation from, any Kind of human Works. It is a Blessing vouchsafed to the Ungodly; not founded on a Freedom

* Rom. iv. 6, 7.

Freedom from Sin, but procuring a Remission of its Guilt.

Some, I know, have attempted to resolve all the Force of this Passage, into an Argument for the *Sameness* of Pardon and Justification. Whereas, the Apostle undertakes to prove, not that Forgiveness and Justification are identically the same, but that both are *absolutely free*. To maintain which Position, He argues—"This Doctrine is as true, as it is comfortable. It agrees with the Experience, and has received the Attestation of *David*. When he speaks of the blessed and happy Man, He describes Him, not as an innocent, but guilty Person: not as having any Claim to the divine Favour, on Account of deserving Performances, or recommending Properties. But as owing all his Acceptance to that sovereign Grace, which *forgives Iniquities, and blots out Sin*. Such is the Case with regard to that evangelical Justification, which We preach. *Even as*; it is, in the *Manner* of its *Vouchsafement*, perfectly similar to the Blessedness celebrated by the *Psalmist*."—The Apostle's Eye, is not so directly upon the Nature of the Privilege, as upon the *Freeness* with which it is granted. Nor can Any infer from the Tenour of his Reasoning, that to be forgiven, is the same as to be justified; only that both are Acts of infinitely rich Mercy; designed for Sinners;

Sinners; promised to Sinners; bestowed on Sinners. Who have nothing, nothing of their own, either to boast, or to plead.

In the fifth Chapter, from Verse the twelfth to the End, the sacred Penman points out the *Cause*, and explains the *Method* of Justification. Of which this is the Sum.—That *CHRIST*, in pursuance of the Covenant of Grace, fulfilled all Righteousness in the Stead of his People—That this Righteousness, being performed for them, is imputed to them—That, by virtue of this gracious Imputation, they are absolved from Guilt, and intitled to Bliss; as thoroughly absolved, and as fully intitled, as if in their own Persons they had undergone the expiatory Sufferings, and paid the meritorious Obedience.—Lest it should seem strange, in the Opinion of a *Jew* or a *Gentile*, to hear of being justified by the Righteousness of *Another*, He urges a parallel Case; recorded in the *Jewish* Revelation, but ratified by *universal* * Experience; namely, Our being condemned for the Unrighteousness of *Another*.—In this Respect, He observes, *Adam* was a Type of our *LORD*; or, a *Figure* of *HIM* that was to come †. The Relations the same, but the

* By the Pains and Death which *Infants*, in every Nation, endure. Which are unquestionably Punishments, and to which they are doomed by the righteous Judgment of *GOD*.

† *Rom.* v. 14.

the Effects happily reversed. *Adam* the Head of his Posterity; *CHRIST* the Head of his People. *Adam's* Sin was imputed to all his Descendents; *CHRIST's* Righteousness is imputed to all Believers. *Adam's* Transgression brought Death into the World, and all our Woe; *CHRIST's* Obedience brings Life and all our Happiness*.—The Whole closes with this very natural and no less weighty Inference; *Therefore, as by the Offence of One, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation; even so, by the Righteousness of One, the free Gift came upon all Men unto Justification of Life*†.

I do not recollect any other Similitude, which the Apostle so copiously unfolds. He explains it; He applies it; He resumes it; and scarcely knows, how to desist from it. I am sure, you will not blame me, if I imitate the sacred Author; revert to the Subject; and quote another Passage from the same Paragraph.—*Much more shall They, who receive Abundance of Grace and of the Gift of Righteousness, reign in Life by one JESUS CHRIST*†.—Here, I am ready

* *Quemadmodum Peccatum Adam, says Bengelius, sine Peccatis quæ postea commisimus, Mortem attulit nobis; sic Justitia CHRISTI, sine bonis Operibus, quæ deinceps a nobis sunt, Vitam nobis conciliat.* That is; As the Sin of *Adam*, without any Concurrence of the Sins, which We Ourselves respectively commit, occasioned our Ruin; so the Righteousness of *CHRIST*, abstracted from all Consideration of our personal Obedience, procures our Recovery.

† *Rom. v. 18.*

† *Rom. v. 17.*

ready to think, the inspired Writer puts a Difference between the two grand Blessings purchased by IMMANUEL, Remission and Righteousness *. For, who are the Persons, which receive Abundance of Grace? They, I apprehend, that, having sinned much, have much forgiven.—Who are the Persons, which receive Abundance of the Gift of Righteousness? They, that having in their own Conduct wrought out none, which will bear the Test of GOD's impartial Scrutiny, have one placed to their Account, which the all-seeing Eye of Heaven approves.—However, whether the Distinction I have ventured to propose, be fanciful or substantial, of this I am persuaded; that the Gift of Righteousness †, must signify

* *Non tantum Peccata sublata, sed Justitia præstata.*

† I cannot but wonder at the Assertion of a late Writer, who roundly declares, “ That there is not one Word in this whole Chapter, relating to the antecedent Obedience of CHRIST's Life, but expressing only his passive Obedience.”—Must then this Group of Expressions—*διχασιον—διχασιμα—υπακοη*—be confined barely to the Sufferings of our LORD? To put such a Sense upon the Words of the Apostle, is, I think, not to hear his Voice, but to gag his Mouth; not to acquiesce in the sacred Oracles, but to make them speak our own Meaning.—Beza, who perhaps is inferior to no Critic, with regard to a masterly Skill in the Greek Language, thus explains *διχασιμα*; *Justificationis est Materia, nempe CHRISTI Obedientia; cujus Imputatio nos justos facit.*—Mintart, in his accurate and copious Lexicon for the Greek Testament, gives this Interpretation of *διχασιον*; *Opera CHRISTO a Patre præscripta hoc Nomine veniunt; nimirum omnia quæ ab ipso præstanda erant, tam ad Le-*

a Righteousness, not originally their own, but Another's; not what they themselves have acquired, but what was fulfilled by their SURETY; and is, by an Act of heavenly Indulgence, consigned over to them. Accordingly, it is represented, not as a *Work*, but a *Gift*; and Those that are interested in it, are styled not *Workers*, but *Receivers*.

I should but faintly copy the apostolic Example, if I did not once again avail myself of this important Topic. Suffer me, therefore, to transcribe one more Verse from this admirable Chapter. *As by the Disobedience of One Man, many were made Sinners, so by the Obedience of One, shall Many be made Righteous* *.—The *Disobedience of One*, is the Disobedience of *Adam*; his actual Transgression of the divine Law. Hereby, *Many were made Sinners*; Sinners, in such a Sense, as to become obnoxious unto Condemnation and Death.—All this, I think, is, from the Apostle's own Words, indisputable. And, if We would preserve the Propriety of his Antithesis, or the Force of his

gis divinæ Impletionem, quam ad Generis humani Redemptionem. Quæ nobis imputata, & per Fidem accepta, faciunt ut coram DEO justificemur.—And as for *υπακοή*, surely that cannot, without the utmost Violence to its native Signification, be so applied to the passive, as to exclude the active Obedience. The contrary Notion, if an artful Disputant should espouse it, might appear somewhat plausible; but *this* has not the least Air of Probability.

* Rom. v. 19.

his Reasoning, We must allow, that the *Obedience of One*, is the Obedience of *CHRIST*; his actual and complete Performance of the whole Law. Hereby, *Many are made Righteous*; righteous, in such a Sense, as to be released from Condemnation, and vested with a Title to Life eternal.—How obvious is this Meaning! How regular this Argumentation. What Subtilty of Evasion must be used, to give a different Turn to the instructive Text!

This is the most consistent Sense, in which I can understand *Rom. viii. 5. That the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in Us, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the SPIRIT.* That the Righteousness required by the holy but broken Law, might be thoroughly accomplished. Accomplished by our public Representative, and in our human Nature. So as to be deemed, in point of legal Estimation, fulfilled *for Us and by Us* *. This, I say, is most consistent with the Tenour of *St. Paul's* Arguing, and with the exact Import of his Language.—*With the Tenour of his Arguing*: for, He undertakes to demonstrate the *Impossibility* of our Justification, by any personal Conformity to the Law. Whereas, if We could satisfy its Penalty, and obey its Precepts; or, in other

* It is remarked by a judicious Critic, and very valuable Expositor, that the Preposition *εὑ* sometimes signifies *by* or *for*; and is so translated, *Matt. v. 34. Heb. i. 1.* See *Dr. Guise's Exposition of the New Testament.*

other Words, fulfil its Righteousness; this Impossibility would cease.—*With the exact Import of his Language*: for the original Phrase denotes, not a *sincere*, but a *complete* Obedience; not what We are enabled to perform, but what the Law has a Right* to demand. Which, every One must acknowledge, is not fulfilled in any mere Man, since the Fall; but was fulfilled by *JESUS CHRIST*, for our Good, and in our Stead.—This Interpretation preserves the Sentences distinct, and makes a very natural Introduction for the following Clause; where the Persons interested in this Privilege, are described by their Fruits, *who walk not after the Flesh, but after the SPIRIT*. Implying, that Justification and Sanctification are, like the *ever-corresponding* Motion of our Eyes, inseparable Concomitants; and We vainly pretend to the former, if We continue destitute of the latter.

We have produced positive Proofs of our Doctrine.—We have heard an Apostle declaring the assured Happiness, and complete Justification

* It may be worth our while to observe, that St. Paul, when treating on this Subject, uses three distinct Words, all derived from the same Original.—*Δικαιοσύνη*, which expresses *Justification*; the accounting or declaring a Person righteous.—*Δικαιοσύνην*, which never signifies Justification, but *Righteousness*; either performed by Us, or imputed to Us.—*Δικαιώματα*, the Phrase which occurs in this Place, and denotes the *Right* or *Demand* of the Law; as that which is indispensably necessary to the Justification of Man.

fication of *true Believers*.—Let Us now observe the same sagacious Judge of Men and Things, discovering the Danger of those *Self-justiciaries*, who reject the REDEEMER's Righteousness. He is filled with the darkest Apprehensions, concerning his Brethren the *Jews*. He is impressed with melancholy Presages, relating to their eternal State. And what was the Cause of this tender Solicitude? Had they cast off all Religion, and given themselves over to gross Immoralities? On the contrary, they were Worshipers of the true GOD; and had, in their Way, not only a *Regard*, but a *Zeal* for his Honour. Wherefore then does this compassionate Father in *Israel* feel the same trembling Uneasiness, for his Kinsmen according to the Flesh, as *Eli* felt for the indangered Ark? Himself assigns the Reason. Because, *they being ignorant of GOD's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of GOD* *. Not knowing that immaculate Holiness, which the perfect Nature, and equally perfect Law of the most High GOD, require—being wilfully ignorant of that consummate Obedience, which an incarnate GOD vouchsafed to perform, for the Justification of his People—they sedulously, but foolishly endeavoured, to establish their own Righteousness; to make it, scanty and decrepit

* *Rom. x. 3.*

decrepit as it was, the Basis of their Hopes.— Thus were they resting their everlasting ALL on a Bottom, not precarious only, but irreparably ruinous. A boundless *Eternity* the Fabric! Yet they built (wonder O Heavens!) on the *Foam* of the Waters! And (which added Stubbornness to their Folly) in avowed Contempt of that strong and sure Foundation, laid by GOD's own Hand in *Sion*.—For this, the good Apostle was afflicted, with “great Heaviness and continual Sorrow.” For this, He made the Prophet's pathetic Complaint his own; *Oh! that my Head were Waters, and my Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might bewail, Day and Night **, the destructive Perverseness of my People! *For my People have committed two Evils: in not thankfully submitting to the Righteousness of GOD, they have forsaken the Fountain of living Waters: in attempting to establish their own Righteousness, they have hewed themselves out Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that can hold no Water †.*

Having shewed *their* fatal Error, He strengthens his Representation, by displaying the happy Success of the Gentiles.—*What shall We say then?* This We confidently affirm, *That the Gentiles, who followed not after Righteousness; who had no Knowledge of it, and no Concern about it; even they have attained to Righteousness.*

* Jer. ix. 1.

† Jer. ii. 13.

ness *.—Strange Assertion! How is this possible? Doubtless, the Righteousness which they attained, could not be any personal Righteousness. Of this they were totally destitute. Instead of practising moral Virtues, or religious Duties, they were immersed in Sensuality, and abandoned to Idolatry. It must therefore be the evangelical, the imputed Righteousness, *even that which* was wrought by *CHRIST*, and *is received by Faith* †.

Israel, in the mean time, the nominal *Israel*, who, with great Pretensions to Sanctity, and many costly Oblations, *followed after the Law of Righteousness, bath not attained to the Law of Righteousness*. Attained! They have done nothing less. They are fallen vastly short of it; they are pronounced guilty by it; they stand con-

* Surely, this must signify more, than “attaining to the *Profession* of a Religion, whereby they may be justified and “saved.” To this Multitudes attain, who continue, as the Prophet speaks, *stout-hearted and far from Righteousness*. Who derive no real Benefit from their Profession; but are rendered utterly inexcusable, and liable to more aggravated Condemnation.

† Surely, *the Righteousness which is by Faith*, cannot consist “in humbly committing the Soul to *CHRIST*, in the “Way that he hath appointed.” According to this Notion, the justifying Righteousness would spring from Ourselves; would be constituted by an Act of our own, and not by the perfect Obedience of our LORD.

I am sorry to see this, and the preceding Interpretation, in the Works of an *Expositor*, whose Learning I admire, whose Piety I reverence, and whose Memory I honour. Yet I must say, on this Occasion, with one of the antient Philosophers; *Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica Veritas*.

condemned before it *.—*Wherefore* did they so grossly mistake, and so grievously miscarry? *Because* they forsook the good old Way, in which *Abraham, David,* and their pious Ancestors walked. They adopted a new Scheme; and would have substituted their own, instead of relying on a SAVIOUR's Righteousness. *They sought for Justification not by Faith, but as it were by the Works of the Law* †. A Method, which their Fathers knew not; which their GOD ordained not; and which proved, as it always will prove, not only abortive, but destructive.—At this Stone they stumbled; on this Rock they split. Let their Ruin be a *Way-mark*, and the Apostle's Observation a *Light-house* to my *Theron*.

Our zealous Writer tries every Expedient. He mingles Hope with Terror. Having pointed out the *Rock*, on which the *Israelites* suffered Shipwreck; He directs Us to the *Haven*, in which Sinners may cast Anchor, and find Safety. He gives

* This, I apprehend, is the Purport of the Apostle's Speech, when He tells Us, that his Countrymen *had not attained unto the Law of Righteousness*. He uses the Figure *metonymy*, and means more than He expresses. Somewhat like the dramatic Poet,

*Qui se primos esse rerum omnium existimant
Nec tamen sunt.*

That is, *they are quite the reverse*.—Or like the Prophet in the Close of this Chapter, *shall not be ashamed*; that is, *shall be encouraged, emboldened, established*.

† *Rom. ix. 30, 31, 32.*

gives Us a fine descriptive View of the *Christian's* complete Happiness. He opens (if I may continue the Metaphor) a free and ample Port for perishing Souls. Not formed by a Neck of Land, or a Ridge of Mountains, but by a magnificent Chain of spiritual Blessings. All proceeding from, all terminating in, that precious Corner-stone *JESUS CHRIST*. *Who of GOD is made unto Us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption* *. *Wisdom*, to enlighten our ignorant Minds. *Righteousness* †, to justify our guilty Persons. *Sanctification* †, to renew our depraved Natures. *Redemption*, to rescue Us from all Evil; and render Us, both in Body and Soul, perfectly and eternally happy.—Let it be remarked, how carefully our inspired Writer sets aside all *Sufficiency*, as well as all *Merit* in Man. He re-

presents

* 1 Cor. i. 30.

†† *Righteousness* and *Sanctification*; the former *imputed*, the latter *inherent*. This preserves a *Distinction* between the noble Articles, and assigns to each a grand Share in the Oeconomy of Salvation.—To say, that, if one of the Blessings is communicated by way of Imputation, the other should be communicated in the same Manner, seems to be *cavilling*, rather than *arguing*. Because, the Subjects are of a different Nature; and therefore must be enjoyed in a different Way.—The *Cocoa Tree* is, to the *American*, Food and Clothing, a Habitation and domestic Utensils. But must We suppose it, administering to all these Uses in *one* and the *same* unvaried Method? Because, in *one* Respect it is eaten or drank, must it be thus applied in all? I believe, the illiterate Savage, who enjoys the several Gifts, need not be taught the Absurdity of such a Supposition.

presents the whole of our Salvation, both in its Procurement and Application, as a Work of freest Grace. *CHRIST* is, and not We Our-selves, the Author of this glorious Restoration, the Cause of this great Felicity. *He is made* all this unto Us—*How?* Not by our own Resolution and Strength; but of *GOD*, by the Agency of his mighty Power, and blessed *SPIRIT*. *He* shews Us the all-sufficient Fulness of *CHRIST*. *He* brings Us by ardent Longings to *CHRIST*. *He* implants Us into *CHRIST*, and makes Us Partakers of his Merits.

In the Process of the same Epistle, the sacred Penman enumerates the *constituent Parts* of that great Salvation, which the *SON* of *GOD* has procured for ruined Sinners. *But Ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the Name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD**. Ye are *washed*; cleansed from the Defilement, and discharged from the Guilt, of all our Iniquities. Ye are *sanctified*; delivered from the Death of Sin, and endued with a living Principle of Holiness. Ye are *justified*; restored to a State of Acceptance with *GOD*, and invested with a Title to eternal Glory. All which inestimable Prerogatives are conferred upon the true Believer, *in the Name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST*; in consideration of his atoning Blood

* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

Blood and meritorious Righteousness. *By the SPIRIT of our GOD*; through the Efficacy of his Operation, revealing *CHRIST*, and working Faith in the Heart.

Some Gentlemen have talked of a *new remedial Law*; whereas, the Apostle declares, that *CHRIST is the End of the old*, the unalterable, the Mosaic *Law, for Righteousness to every One that believeth* *.—Follow the Course of a River; it will constantly lead You to the Ocean. Trace the Veins of the Body; they invariably unite in the Heart. Mark likewise the Tendency of the Law; it no less constantly and invariably conducts You to *CHRIST*, as the Center of its Views, and the Consummation of its Demands.—The *moral Law* aims, at discovering our Guilt, and demonstrating our inexpressible Need of a SAVIOUR. The *ceremonial* points Him out, as suffering in our Stead; making Reconciliation for Iniquity; and purging away every Defilement with his Blood.—They *both* direct the wretched Transgressor, to renounce Himself, and fly to the REDEEMER. Who alone has paid that perfect Obedience, and brought in that everlasting Righteousness, which the Sinner wants, and the Law exacts. Who is, therefore, the only proper *Accomplishment* of the one, and the only suitable *Supply* for the other.

What

* Rom. x. 4.

What is the grand Design of the whole Scriptures? St. Paul, displaying their sublime Origin, and enumerating the gracious Purposes, they are intended to serve, writes thus: *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of GOD; and is profitable—for Doctrine, to declare and establish religious Truth—for Reproof, to convince of Sin, and to refute Error—for Correction*, or Renovation of the Heart, and Reformation of the Life—for Instruction in Righteousness, in that Righteousness, which could never have been learned from any other Book, and in which alone sinful Men may appear with Comfort before their GOD.*

We have seen the principal Scope of the Law, and the leading Design of the Scriptures: let Us add one Inquiry more. What is the chief Office of the SPIRIT?—If all these coincide, and uniformly terminate in the imputed Righteousness of CHRIST; We have a Confirmation of its Reality and Excellence, great as Man can desire, I had almost said, great as GOD can impart.—What says our LORD upon this Point? *When He, the SPIRIT of Truth is come, He shall convince † the World of Sin, of Righteousness,*

* 2 Tim. iii. 15. Πρὸς ἐναποδωρῶν.

† *He shall convince*, seems to be the most proper Translation of εἰσέξει. As it implies the *sure Success*, which attends the Operation of the divine SPIRIT.—Man may *reprove*, and no Conviction ensue. Whereas, that Almighty AGENT not only reproveth, but reproveth with Power; so as to determine the Judgment, and sway the Affections.

ness, and of Judgment. Of Sin, because they believe not in me: of Righteousness, because I go to my FATHER, and ye see me no more: of Judgment, because the Prince of this World is judged.*

—Is it possible for Words to be more weighty and *comprehensive*? Here is a Summary of Christian Faith, and Christian Holiness. Not that *superficial* Holiness, which is patched up of devotional Forms, and external Performances: but that which is *vital*, and springs from the Heart; consists in Power, not in mere Profession; whose Praise, if not of Men, who are smitten with pompous Outfides, is sure to be of GOD, who distinguishes the Things that are excellent.

He shall convince the World of Sin; of original and actual Sin. The Sin of their Nature, as well as the Sin of their Life; the Sin of their best Deeds, no less than of their criminal Commissions, and blameable Omissions. Above all, of their sinning against the sovereign, the only Remedy, by Unbelief; because they believe not on me.—He shall convince of Righteousness; of the divine REDEEMER's Righteousness, which the foregoing Conviction must render peculiarly welcome. Convince them, that it was wrought out in behalf of disobedient and defective Mortals; that it is absolutely perfect, and sufficient to justify even the most Ungodly. Of all which an incontestable Proof is given,

by

* *John xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11.*

by his Resurrection from the Dead, his triumphant Ascension into Heaven, and Session at the Right-hand of his FATHER; *because I go to my FATHER, and ye see me no more**.—He shall convince of *Judgment*. Those, who are humbled under a Sense of Guilt, and justified through an imputed Righteousness, shall be taught by happy Experience, that *the Prince of this World is condemned* and dethroned in their Hearts: That their Souls are rescued from the Tyranny of Satan, and restored to the Liberty—the glorious Liberty of the Children of GOD.

You wonder, perhaps, that I have not strengthened my Cause, by any Quotation from the Epistle to the *Galatians*. What I design, my dear *Theron*, is not to *accumulate*, but to *select* Arguments. However, that I may not disappoint an Expectation so reasonable, I proceed to lay before You a very nervous Passage, from that masterly Piece of sacred Controversy. —Only, let me just observe, that the Epistle was written to Persons, who had embraced *Christianity*, and professed an Affiance in *CHRIST*. But would fain have *joined* Circumcision, — would fain have *superadded* their own religious Duties, to the Merits of their SAVIOUR; in order

* For. if the Work had been imperfect in any Degree, our REDEEMER, instead of taking up his stated and final Residence in the Regions of Glory, must have descended again into this inferior World, to complete what was deficient.

order to constitute, at least, *some* Part of their justifying Righteousness. Against which Error, the vigilant and indefatigable Assertor of the Truth as it is in JESUS, remonstrates—

We who are Jews by Nature, and not Sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a Man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of JESUS CHRIST, even We have believed in JESUS CHRIST; that We might be justified by the Faith of CHRIST, and not by the Works of the Law; for, by the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified.*

We, who are Jews by Nature, the Descendants of Abraham, and GOD's peculiar People; have the Tables of his Law, and the Ordinances of his Worship: We who, in point of Privileges, are greatly superior to the Gentile Nations, and have all possible Advantages for establishing (if such a Thing were practicable) a Righteousness of our own; What have We done?—We have believed on JESUS CHRIST: We have disclaimed our own, and depended on his Obedience.—For what End? That by this Faith in CHRIST, and by his imputed Merits,

* Gal. ii. 15, 16. Observable, very observable is the Zeal of the Apostle, in this noble Stand, made against the most specious, and therefore the most dangerous, Encroachments of Error. To express his ardent Concern for the Truth and Purity of the Gospel, the *Works of the Law* are mentioned no less than three Times, and as often excluded from the Affair of Justification. The Faith of CHRIST likewise is thrice inculcated, and as often asserted to be the only Method of becoming righteous before GOD.

rits, We *may be justified* before GOD?—
What Motive has induced Us to this Practice?
A firm Persuasion, that by *the Works of the Law*, or by personal Holiness, *no Man living* has been, and no Man living *can be justified*.

Are You tired, *Theron*? Have I fatigued your Attention, instead of convincing your Judgment?—I will not harbour such a Suspicion. It is pleasing to converse with Those, who have traveled into *foreign Countries*, and seen the *Wonders* of Creation. We hearken to their Narratives with Delight. Every new Adventure whets our Curiosity, rather than palls our Appetite. Must it not then afford a more sublime Satisfaction, to be entertained with the Discourses of a Person, who had, not indeed sailed round the World, but made a Journey to the *third Heavens*? Who had been admitted into the *Paradise* of GOD, and heard Things of infinite Importance, and unutterable Dignity?—This was the Privilege of that incomparable Man, whose Observations and Discoveries, I have been presenting to my Friend. And I promise myself, He will not complain of Weariness, if I enrich my Epistle with one or two more of those glorious Truths.

GOD *bath made HIM to be Sin for Us who knew no Sin; that We might, not be put into a Capacity of acquiring a Righteousness of our own, but be made the Righteousness of GOD*
in

in Him *. In this Text, the *double* Imputation of our Sin to *CHRIST*, and of *CHRIST*'s Righteousness to Us, is most emphatically taught, and most charmingly contrasted.—Most *emphatically taught*. For, We are said not barely to be righteous, but to be made Righteousness itself; and not Righteousness only, but (which is the utmost that Language can reach) the Righteousness of GOD.—Most *charmingly contrasted*. For, One cannot but ask, In what Manner, *CHRIST* was made Sin? In the very same Manner, We are made Righteousness. *CHRIST* knew no *actual* Sin; yet, upon his mediatorial Interposition on our Behalf, He was treated by divine JUSTICE, as a sinful Person. We likewise are destitute of all *legal* Righteousness; Yet, upon our receiving *CHRIST*, and believing in his Name, We are regarded by the Divine MAJESTY, as righteous Creatures. This therefore cannot, in either Case, be *intrinsically*; but must be, in both Instances, *imputatively*.—Gracious, divinely gracious Exchange †! pregnant with amazing Goodness, and rich with inestimable

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

† Ita scilicet mirabili Permutatione Mala nostra in se recepit, ut Bona sua nobis largiretur; recepit Miseriam, ut largiretur Misericordiam; recepit Maledictionem, ut Benedictionis suae compotes nos faceret; recepit Mortem, ut Vitam conferret; recepit Peccatum, ut Justitiam impertiretur. Thus writes the judicious Turretin. To which, in Concurrence with the accurate Witsius, I subscribe both with Hand and Heart.

estimable Benefits. The incessant Triumph of the *strong*, the sovereign Consolation of the *weak* Believer!

Cease your Exultation, cries One, and come down from your Altitudes. The Term used in this Verse denotes, not so properly *Sin*, as an *Offering for Sin*.—This is a mere Supposal, which I may as reasonably deny, as Another affirm. Since the Word occurs, much *more frequently* in the former Signification, than in the latter; and since, by giving it the latter Signification in the Passage before Us, We very much impair, if not totally destroy, the Apostle's beautiful *Antithesis*.

However; not to contend, but to allow the Remark. I borrow my Reply from a brave old *Champion* * for the Truths of the Gospel: " This Text, says He, invincibly proveth, " That We are not justified in GOD's Sight " by Righteousness inherent in Us, but by " the Righteousness of *CHRIST* imputed to " Us through Faith." After which He adds, what I make my Answer to the Objection; " That *CHRIST* was made Sin for Us, be- " cause

* See Dr. Fulk's Annotation on the Place, in that valuable Piece of antient Controversy and Criticism, *The Examination of the Rhemish Testament*. Which, though not altogether so elegant and refined in the Language, nor so delicate and genteel in the Manner, as might be wished; is nevertheless full of *sound Divinity, weighty Arguments, and very important Observations*.—Would the young Student be taught to discover the *very Sinners* of Popery, and be enabled to give an effectual Blow to that Complication of Errors, I scarce know a Treatise better calculated for the Purpose.

“ cause He was a Sacrifice for Sin, We confess: but *therefore* was He a Sacrifice for Sin, because our Sin was imputed to Him, “ and punished in Him.”—The poor Delinquents under the *Mosaic* Dispensation, who brought their Sin-offering to the Altar of the LORD, were directed to lay their Hand on the devoted Beast; signifying, by this Usage, the transferring of Guilt from the Offerer to the Sacrifice. Conformably to the Import of this Ceremony, *CHRIST* assumed our Demerit; like a true *piacular* Victim, suffered the Punishment, which We had deserved; and which, without such a Commutation, We must have undergone. So that our LORD's being made a Sin-offering for Us, does by no means invalidate, but very much confirm our Doctrine. It necessarily implies the Translation of our Guilt to his Person; and on the Principles of Analogy, must infer the Imputation of *his Righteousness* to our Souls.

One Passage more permit me to transcribe into my Paper; and, at the same Time, to wish, that it may be written on both our Hearts. Written, not with Ink and Pen, no, nor with the Point of a Diamond, but with the Finger of the living GOD. *Yea doubtless, and I count all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD; for whom I have suffered the Loss of all Things, and do count them but Dung, that I may win CHRIST,*

and be found in Him; not having mine own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of CHRIST, the Righteousness which is of GOD through Faith*.

Be pleased to observe, that in this Confession of Faith, and with Reference to the grand Affair of Justification, the Apostle renounces all those Acts of supposed Righteousness, which were antecedent to his Conversion.—Nor does He repudiate them only, but all those more excellent Services, by which He was so eminently distinguished, even after his Attachment to CHRIST, and Engagement in the Christian Ministry. As though He should say —“ The Privilege of being a *Hebrew* by Birth; “ the Prerogative of being a *Pharisee* by Profession; together with a Behaviour exemplary, and a Reputation unblameable; all these, which were once reckoned my highest Gain, as soon as I became acquainted with the glorious Perfections of CHRIST, I counted † *Loss* for Him.—And now, though I have been a *Disciple* many Years; have walked in all holy Conversation and Godliness; have endured, for my divine MASTER’s Name, Tribulations above measure; have laboured more abundantly and more successfully than all the Apostles; yet, even these and all other Attainments, of what Kind “ or

* *Phil.* iii. 8, 9.

† *Ἔχρηται*, in *Præterito*. I have counted.

“ or of what Date soever, I *count* * but Loss,
 “ for the transcendent Excellency of *CHRIST*
 “ *JESUS* my LORD.—*Yea doubtless* †; it is my
 “ deliberate and stedfast Resolution; what I
 “ have most seriously adopted and do publicly
 “ avow; that, specious as all these Acquire-
 “ ments may seem, and valuable as they may
 “ be in other Respects, I reckon them *but*
 “ *Dung*, that I may win *CHRIST* ‡. They
 “ fade into nothing, they dwindle into *less*
 “ *than nothing*, if set in competition with his
 “ matchless Obedience: and were they to su-
 “ persede my Application to his Merits, or
 “ weaken my Reliance on his Mediation, they
 “ would be not contemptible only, but irre-
 “ parably injurious, *Loss itself*.”

You will ask, If He absolutely rejects all
 his own Righteousness, on *what* are his Hopes
 fixed?

* *ἡγούμεναι*, in Præsentis. *I do count*.

† Perhaps, *ἀλλὰ μινουμένη* may be translated, *but truly*.
 As if He had said, “ But why should I mention any more
 “ Particulars. *In truth*, I count all Things, &c.”

‡ *Διὰ Χριστον—διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον—ἵνα Χριστον κερδήσω*—
 plainly imply this *comparative* or *relative* Sense. *Virtues*,
 which are the Fruits of the SPIRIT, and *Labours*, which
 are a Blessing to Mankind, must not be reckoned *absolutely*
 or in *all* Respects despicable; but only in a limited and qual-
 ified Acceptation. Despicable, *not in themselves*, but as com-
 pared with the divinely perfect Righteousness of *CHRIST*,
 or as referred to the infinitely important Article of Justifica-
 tion.

That *Aspasio*, in this whole Paragraph, speaks the Sense
 of our Church, will appear from the following Extract:—
 “ The Apostle St. Paul saith, He doth glory, in what? In
 “ the Contempt of his own Righteousness; and that He
 “ looketh for the Righteousness of GOD by Faith.” *Hq-
 mily of Salvation*, Part II.

fixed?—On a Foundation, *extensive* as the Obedience of the REDEEMER's Life and Death, *unshaken* as the Dignity of his eternal Power and GODHEAD. They are fixed on *the Righteousness which is of GOD*; the Righteousness which GOD the FATHER, in unsearchable Wisdom, provided; and which GOD the SON, in unutterable Goodness, wrought.—Do You inquire, *How* He came to be invested with this Righteousness? The Answer is ready and satisfactory. It was by the Application of the divine SPIRIT, and the Instrumentality of *Faith*.—Lest Any should imagine, That this Faith might be substituted, instead of his own Obedience to the Law; He puts an apparent Difference between the Righteousness which justifies, and the Faith by which it is received: not the Righteousness which *consists in*, but is *THROUGH the Faith of CHRIST*.—To shew the great Importance of this Distinction; how earnestly He insisted upon it, as a Preacher; how much it tended to his Consolation, as a *Christian*; He repeats the Sentiment, He re-inculcates the Doctrine, *The Righteousness which is of GOD by Faith*.

Will You now, *Theron*, or shall I, poor unprofitable Creatures, presume to rely on any Performances or any Accomplishments of our own? When that distinguished Saint—a perfect Prodigy of Gifts, of Graces, and of Zeal—*indefatigable in Labours, unconquerable by Afflic-*

Afflictions, and of whose Usefulness there is neither Measure nor End—When *He* denies Himself in every View; depreciates all; disavows all; and makes mention of nothing, but the incomparable Righteousness of his obedient, dying, interceding SAVIOUR.

What shall I say more? Shall I attempt to play the Rhetorician, and borrow the insinuating Arts of Persuasion? This, after all the *cogent Testimonies* produced, and all the *great Authorities* urged, would be a needless Parade. When our Pen is a Sunbeam, there is but little Occasion to dip it in Oil.

Instead of such an Attempt, give me Leave to make a frank and honest Confession. I would conceal nothing from my Friend. He should have a Sash to my Breast; throw it up at his Pleasure; and see all that passes within.—Though I never had any Temptation to that pernicious Set of Errors, which passes under the Character of *Socinianism*; yet I had many Searchings of Heart, and much solicitous Inquiry, How far We are indebted to *CHRIST's active Righteousness*. Thoroughly persuaded, that *Other Foundation can no Man lay, save that which is laid, even JESUS CHRIST**; and that *there is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby Men can be saved†*; yet, whether We were not to confine our believing

Regards

* 1 Cor. iii. 11.

† Acts iv. 12.

Regards to a *dying* SAVIOUR, was Matter of considerable Doubt.—At first, I was inclined to acquiesce in the Affirmative. After long Consideration and many Prayers, my Faith fixed upon the *Whole* of CHRIST's mediatorial Undertaking. Which began in his spontaneous Submission to the Law; was carried on through all his meritorious Life; and issued in his atoning Death.—This is now the *Bas*is of my Confidence, and the *Bulwark* of my Happiness. Hither I fly; here I rest; as the *Dove*, after her wearisome and fruitless Rovings, returned to *Noah*, and rested in the Ark.

This Scheme first recommended itself to my *Affections*; as making the most ample Provision, for the Security and Repose of a guilty Conscience. Which, when alarmed by the Accusations of Sin, is very apprehensive of its Condition; and will not be comforted, till every Scruple is satisfied, and all the Obstructions to its Peace are removed. Thus I reasoned with myself—"Though there is, undoubtedly, something to be said for the other Side of the Question; yet, this is evidently the *safest* Method. And, in an Affair of *infinite* Consequence, who would not prefer the safest Expedient?—Should the Righteousness of *JESUS CHRIST* be *indispensably* requisite, as a Wedding-garment; what will *they* do, when the great immortal

KING

" KING appears, who have refused to accept
 " it? Whereas, should it not prove *so absolutely*
 " necessary, yet such a Dependence can never
 " obstruct our Salvation. It can never be
 " charged upon Us, as an Article of Contu-
 " macy or Perverseness, that We thought *too*
 " *meanly* of our own, *too magnificently* of our
 " LORD's Obedience. So that let the Die
 " turn either Way, We are exposed to no Ha-
 " zard.—This Scheme takes in all, that the
 " other Systems comprehend, and abundantly
 " more. In this I find no Defect, no Flaw,
 " no Shadow of Insufficiency. It is somewhat
 " like the *perfect Cube*; which, where-ever it
 " may be thrown, or however it may fall, is
 " sure to settle upon its Base.—Supposing,
 " therefore, the important Beam should hang
 " in Equilibrio, with respect to Argument;
 " these Circumstances, cast into the Scale,
 " may very justly be allowed to turn the Ba-
 " lance."

Upon a more attentive Examination of the
 Subject, I perceived—That this is the Doc-
 trine of our *national Church*; is enforced by
 the Attestation of our ablest Divines; and has
 been, in all Ages, the Consolation of the most
 eminent Saints:—That it is the genuine Sense
 of Scripture; and not some inferior or subor-
 dinate Point, incidentally touched upon by
 the inspired Writers, but the *Sum and Sub-*
stance.

stance * of their heavenly Message; that which constitutes the *Vitals* of their System, and is the very *Soul* of their Religion. On which Account the whole Gospel is denominated from it, and styled *The Ministration of Righteousness*:—I was farther convinced, That this Way of Salvation magnifies, beyond Compare, the divine Law; is no less honourable to all the divine Attributes; and exhibits the ever blessed MEDIATOR in the most illustrious and the most delightful View:—All these Considerations, under the Influence of the eternal SPIRIT, have determined my *Judgment*, and established my *Faith*. So that I trust, neither the Subtilties of Wit, nor the Sneers of Ridicule, nor any other Artifice, shall ever be able to separate me from the Grace and Righteousness which are in *JESUS CHRIST*.

Let me now, by way of Conclusion, review that awful Subject, which introduced the Letter. Let me suppose the JUDGE, who is at

the

* This Doctrine runs through St. Paul's Writings, like a golden *Warp*. While Privileges, Blessings, and evangelical Duties are (if I may allude to the Ornaments of the Sanctuary) like a *Woof* of Blue, of Purple, of Scarlet, and indeed of every pleasant Colour. *The Righteousness of GOD*, Rom. i. 17. — *The Righteousness from GOD*, Phil. iii. 10. — *Righteousness by Faith*, Rom. iii. 22. — *Righteousness of Faith*, Rom. iv. 11. — *Righteousness without Works*, Rom. iv. 6. — *Righteousness in the Blood of CHRIST*, Rom. v. 9. — *Righteousness by the Obedience of CHRIST*, Rom. v. 19. — *Righteousness not our own*, Phil. iii. 9. — *Righteousness imputed by GOD*, Rom. iv. 6, 10, 22.

the Door, actually come: the great and terrible Day, which is *hasting forward**, really commenced.—Hark! The Trumpet sounds the universal Summons. The Living are struck with a death-like Astonishment; the Dead start from their silent Abodes.—See! The whole Earth takes Fire; the Sun is turned into Darkness; and the Stars fall from their Spheres.—Behold! The *LORD JESUS* comes, with Myriads of his Angels. The Judgment is set; and the Books are opened.

Observe those exemplary *Christians*, whose Sentiments I have been collecting. *They* renounce themselves, and rely on their glorious SURETY. Methinks, I hear them say, Each as they quit their Beds of Dust; *I will go forth from the Grave in thy Strength*, O blessed *JESUS*; and, at the decisive Tribunal, *will make mention of thy Righteousness only*.—At the same time,

* The sacred Writers, I observe, often remind their Readers of this grand Event; often display this *delightful, dreadful* Scene.—Their Manner of Speaking shews, that they themselves lived under the habitual and joyful Expectation of it: as Persons, that were *looking for, and hasting to, the Coming of the Day of GOD*.—They represent it, not only as *sure*, but *near*; yea, *very near*, and upon the Point to take place. *The LORD is at Hand. The JUDGE is at the Door. Yet a little while, and HE that shall come, will come and will not tarry*.—The last Passage is the most spirited and emphatical of them all; but has lost much of its Emphasis, by the *English* Version. It is in the Original *μικρον ορον ορον*. A beautiful Pleonasm; by which the *Septuagint*, though too often inaccurate in translating the *prophetic* Text, have very happily expressed *Isaiah's* *רַעַי עַל מְעַט* Which may, I think, be rendered in our Language, *yet a very, very little while*. Heb. x. 37. *Isai.* xxvi. 20.

time, will You, *Tberon*, or shall I, stand forth and declare—before the innumerable Multitude of anxious Sinners, and adoring Seraphs —“ Let those pusillanimous Creatures fly for
 “ Refuge to their SAVIOUR’s Righteousness.
 “ We will confide in Works, in Accomplish-
 “ ments of our own. We are the Men, who
 “ have *personally* kept the divine Law, and
 “ want no *supposititious* Obedience from An-
 “ other. Let the Eye that glances through Im-
 “ mensity, and penetrates the deepest Recesses
 “ of the Heart; let that holy and omniscient
 “ Eye, examine our Temper, and sift our
 “ Conduct. We are bold to risk our Souls,
 “ and all their *immortal Interests*, on the Issue
 “ of such a Scrutiny.”

Perhaps, Your Mind is impressed with this *solemn Scene*, and your Thoughts recoil at such *daring Presumption*. If so, it will be proper for me to withdraw, and leave You to your own Meditations. At such Moments to obtrude on Your Company, would render me the troublesome and officious, rather than

The respectful and affectionate



ASPASIO.

The END of the SECOND VOLUME.

